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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

DREAM JOB

**ART STUDIO
SURVIVAL GUIDE**

Future

THE ART OF ANIMATION

- Discover new ways to render characters
- Improve your lighting skills in Photoshop
- Learn pro secrets for building a film scene

Inside

**HOW TO TRAIN YOUR
DRAGON 2 CONCEPTS**

CREATE COOL
CUSTOM BRUSHES

**ARE ALL ARTISTS
A LITTLE BIT MAD?**

BATTLE READY! PAINT REALISTIC ARMOUR USING OILS WITH OUR EXPERT HELP



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Welcome... to a different approach



This month we shine an Anglepoise lamp over the exciting work of CG animation. The industry has come a long way since a group of artists decided to create a film based on the adventures of plastic toys, because their smoothness and shine made them easier to render than hair and fur – as with 1995's excellent *Toy Story*.

Evidently, technology doesn't always hold the key to innovation. People do. Talent and creative enterprise makes a difference.

What I've also found interesting with this month's workshop artists is that although they still use core art principles, they also adopt a different approach to working on an image. Lighting, for one, seems to be a key factor early on when setting up a scene. See if you can apply these principles, and whether this improves your art.

I also enjoyed Chris Oatley's insights into getting a dream job in animation (page 60). It's not just about being the best artist you can be, but also about fitting into a team and making the aims of your boss or company your goal. We also met with Moonbot Studios (page 40), an inspiring environment bursting with creativity.

Hopefully, you'll find lots of inspiring thinking bursting out of these pages, too. None more so than in our FXPosé section. Here's where you can see what your contemporaries are creating, and it's also where art directors go when they're looking for the next artist to commission. To be a part of this, simply send us your art – details on page 19. It could be the best move you ever make.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



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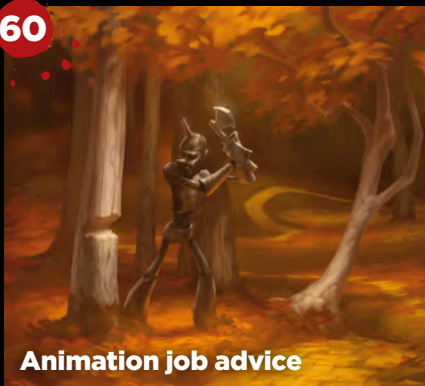
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DOWNLOAD RESOURCES

Turn over the page for this issue's art assets



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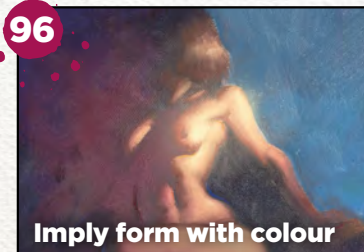
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Brian Froud talks art



ImagineFX Resources

Getting your hands on all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/vis113dev>

OVER 4 HOURS
of workshop and Q&A videos to watch and learn from!

WORKSHOP VIDEO

Design a set for animation

Mingjue Helen Chen passes on her knowledge for constructing a virtual set for an animation feature.



GET YOUR RESOURCES

You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

- 1 Go to the website**
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- 2 Find the files you want**
Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
- 3 Download what you need**
You can download all of the files at once, or individually.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

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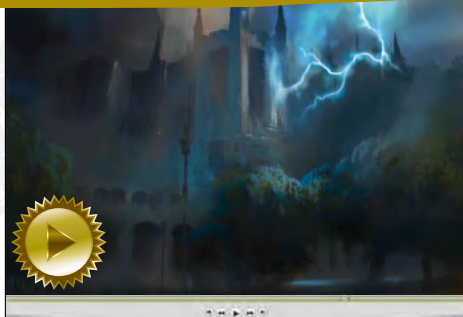




EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUTORIAL!

Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

WORKSHOP VIDEOS



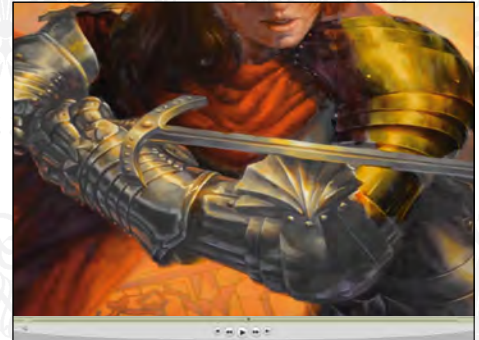
Nathan Fowkes

Use Photoshop to develop an intelligent lighting design for your environments. **Plus WIPs and final image**



Michael C Hayes

Discover the traditional oil painting techniques that Michael uses to depict the intricate plate armour worn by a determined knight in the heat of battle. **Plus WIPs and final image**



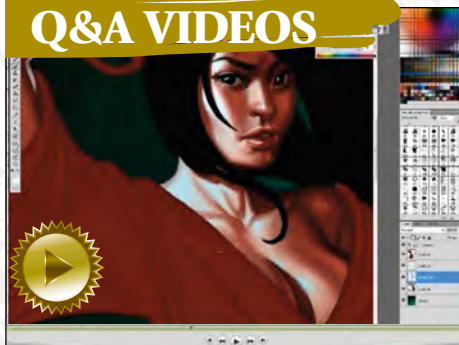
TRAINING



Aaron Limonick

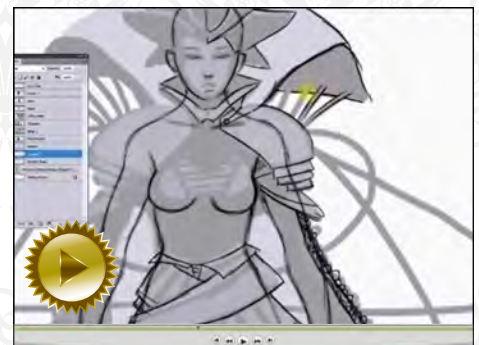
Watch a clip from Concept Design Workflow Vol 1: Composition Sketching, on the importance of thumbnails.

Q&A VIDEOS



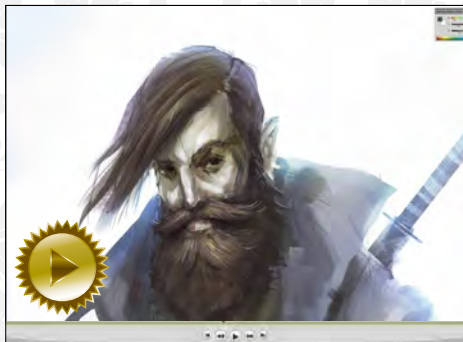
Sara Forlenza

Learn how to place a strong white light source in your composition, and ensure that it accurately affects all objects.



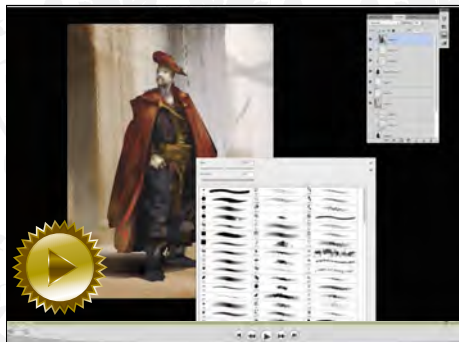
Tony Foti

Concept and paint a futuristic gown for your sci-fi female characters, that's appropriate for the world they inhabit.



Mark Molnar

Give your fantasy characters a decent beard by treating it as a single shape rather than trying to paint individual hairs.



Mark Molnar

Elevate your character's social class and give them a sense of nobility, using fine clothing and posture techniques.



Don Seegmiller

Discover how to depict the wing of a flying creature, such as a bat, that has bright moonlight shining behind it.

7 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

MED ROUND

Pramin Phatiphong uses this to lay down colours and broad strokes.

006OILPASTEL

This is ideal for sketching out shapes, says Mingjue Helen Chen...

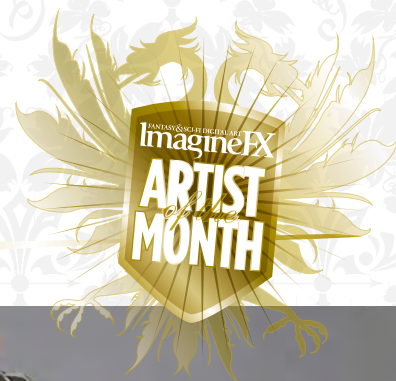
LIGHT_THICK_PAINT

... and she uses this brush for creating a subtle wood grain texture.



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FANTASY ART



+ Michal Kus

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MEDIA: Photoshop, SketchUp, Maya, Modo



Michal has two great passions: drawing and video games. So working as a concept artist for EA Games is as close to a dream job as he's ever likely to find.

His speciality is vehicle design, depicting "hardware of future and alternate worlds". His advice for aspiring concept artists is simple: put the time in. "I focus on the presentation," Michal says. "I render in detail to make it feel believable. I want my viewers to have the urge to touch the metal on my vehicles and feel the texture."

1 DEATH RAY TROOPER "This was done for the game March of War by ISOTX. I wanted to picture a character wearing a suit that's high-tech for its time. I was keen to keep the visual hooks of the WWII era, but give it an alternate, exotic appearance."

2 INDIA FUTURE "This is a personal project in which I'm mixing the rich culture of India with a lot of sci-fi elements. This image features a factory where mechs are being made for clients all around the world. Because they're too busy fighting each other, India has become the main supplier of high-tech military equipment."

3 NOD SCORPION TANK "As a huge fan of the Command & Conquer real-time strategy games, I always wanted to make a redesign of the original Scorpion tank from C&C 3, which was designed by Feng Zhu."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Michal - you've won yourself a copy of Exposé II and d'artiste: Character Design! To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.

1



© ISOTX



2



3



Artist crit

Concept artist Francesco Corvino praises the energy of Michal's futuristic imagery



"Michal develops interesting designs and enriches them with details. The sci-fi elements are rendered in a realistic and weathered style that make them believable."

© EA games

Clark Huggins

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MEDIA: Photoshop



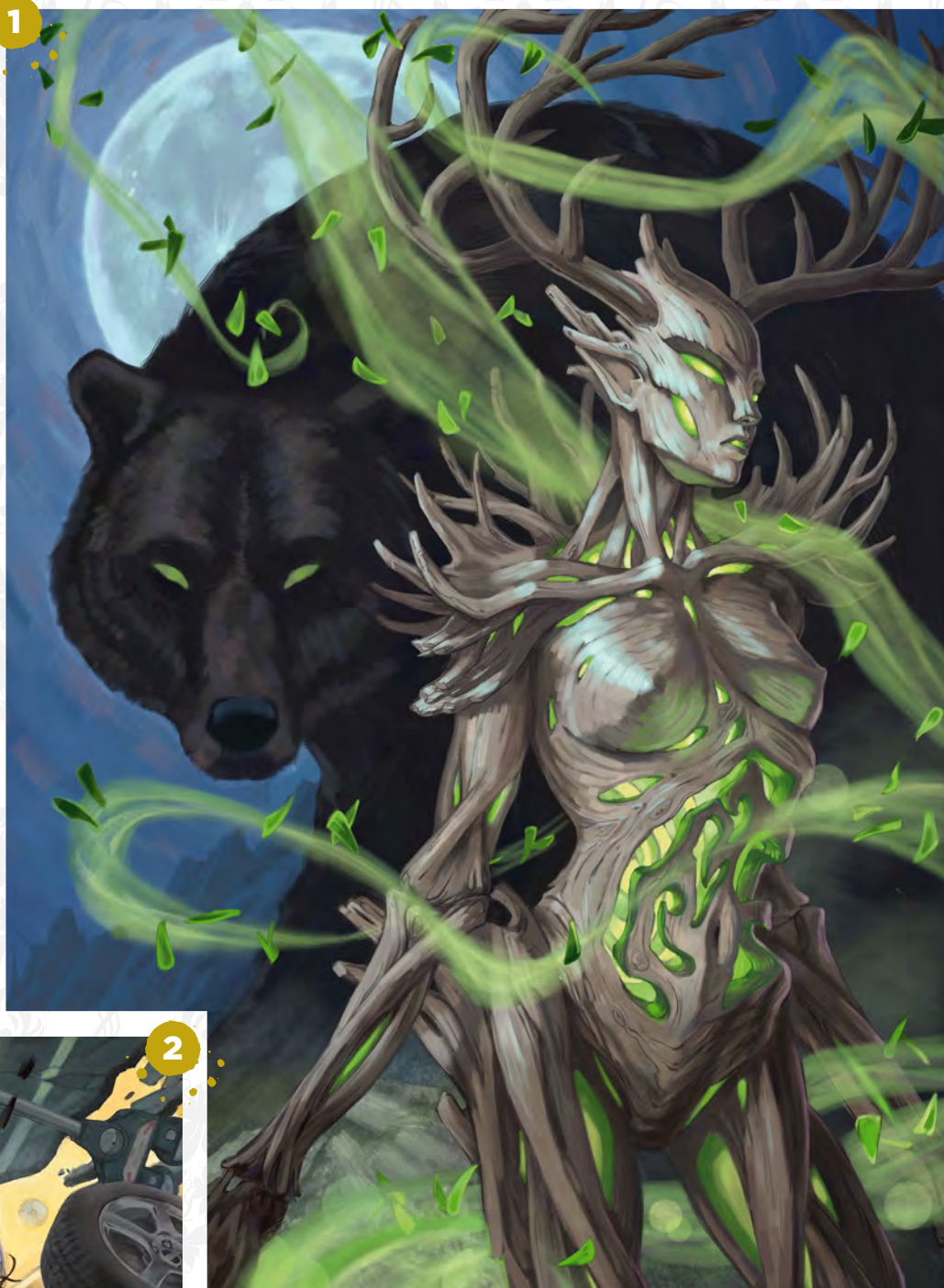
Clark has studied at such esteemed institutes as Syracuse University, Rhode Island School of Design and the ART Institute at Harvard University. His credits as a storyboard illustrator in TV and advertising include Damages, True Blood and American Horror Story.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Clark is enrolled in the SmART School online mentorship programme, whose instructors include Rebecca Guay and Greg Manchess. "I'm busy breaking into card art," Clark says, "often working for Fantasy Flight Games."

1 SPRIGGAN MOONRISE "This is my newest piece, created for an end-of-semester assignment in my SmART School mentorship with Rebecca Guay. Skyrim fans should recognise it."

2 EYE OF THE STORM "I wanted my comic book hero to have a sleek, modern look, but with some steampunk influences. The initial sketches showed her whole body, and she had these fabulous big boots and high-high stockings, and I was a little sorry to see them go in the final composition."

3 SYNDICATE AGENT "This was for the Call Of Cthulhu game by Fantasy Flight Games. Being from Providence, originally, I'm a big HP Lovecraft fan, so I loved working on this."



© 2014 Fantasy Flight Games

Sung Choi

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Sung is a Los Angeles-based concept artist and illustrator who specialises in environments. Splitting his time between studies in digital media at Otis College of Art and Design and freelance work at Santa Monica concept art studio One Pixel Brush, Sung also likes to get outside and draw landscapes first-hand.

"Throughout my many struggles and failures," he says, "I kept going because I've always wanted to be a great artist, someone who has a great sense of how to visualise ideas."

1



2

1 A CRASH-LANDING "An astronaut loses his signal during the mission and crash-lands on an uncharted planet. His feeling of isolation is heightened by the look of the stormy sky."

2 THE HUNTRESS "A huntress lives deep in the snowy forest. Her guardian is an ancient animal who's been keeping the forest safe from strangers and people who want to destroy this peaceful land. He was attracted by her purity and decided to be her companion."

3 THE GIANT WORM "The worm was eating the town's crops, so the local cowboys decided to set a trap for the beast and kill it at all costs."



3



Filipe Pagliuso

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Filipe is fascinated by oil and watercolour paintings. "I always try to absorb as much as possible from these techniques," the

artist says, "and translate them into my digital pieces."

Filipe cites Karl Kopinski, Adrian Smith and Cynthia Sheppard as inspirations for his own fantasy-based work. Yet the Brazilian, a graphic design graduate from São Paulo State University, says art shouldn't just be about materials or subject matter, but rather something greater.

"You know," Filipe concludes, "it doesn't matter what medium you use. It's about the information you are able to translate in your own work."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Wise words from Filipe: pick whatever medium best suits the story you want to tell. And the success of the Brazilian's art lies in his skills as a storyteller. Barbarian's Beach, in particular, is an arresting image. Good work."

Gary Evans,
Staff Writer

1



2



1 DRUID "This was my first contribution for Era, a trading card game developed in Brazil. I spent a lot of time on it. I proved to myself I could work hard and produce good results."

2 RUNNING WITH WOLVES "I created this girl for Era. Her story is told on five cards: she was a baby left for the wolves, but she lived with them until she became a powerful druid."

3 BARBARIAN'S BEACH "My goal in this piece was to try and improve the edges in paintings, as well as my use of colour. It was a challenge because I didn't know how the final piece would turn out. I can say now that the final result made me very happy. It was done for a Brazilian role-playing game project called Arkkladom."



Eric Messinger

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Eric's childhood dreams were simple enough. He wanted to "drive big trucks and draw crazy cool pictures". A love of Dungeons & Dragons and an art teacher who showed him the work of Frank Frazetta steered him away from 18-wheelers and towards fantasy art. Today Eric leads a graphic design team by day and freelances by night.

"I love texture and colour," says the artist. "Even though it's the thing I find most challenging to master. But once I discovered I could build better textures with layering techniques and custom brushes, painting became crazy-fun!"

1 SKULL CLAN WARRIOR "This showed up in my sketchpad while I was listening to an audio book of my favourite fantasy series."

2 WARRIOR BETWEEN THE HILLS "Paintings can have humble beginnings. This one started from a helmet design sketch."

3 SATYR AND THE FAIRY FOREST "Sometimes the supporting characters demand their own paintings and this satyr is one of them."



1



Jorge Ramos

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Jorge, aka Jorem, studied illustration and graphic design, before launching into his freelance career. He believes the best art is built on solid line work.

"I find it really helpful," he says, "to develop good, clear line work. It's something to paint on, without encountering problems such as missing parts or confusion about the overall direction of the piece, which would make me undo and redo many times."

Jorge recently began experimenting with "a more three-dimensional point of view" in his art, which he hopes to hone in future pieces.

2



1 ICE AND SCALES "I wanted to convey the immense size of the dragon to the viewer. I achieved this by depicting tiny figures in the snow, and also making the dragon's body too big to fit in the frame of the image."

2 DROW SACRIFICE "I love the Forgotten Realms books and I felt compelled to paint this image because I think a race of evil elves is unique in fantasy stories. I was also challenging myself. I placed an eerie light at the bottom of the piece that gives the scene a feeling of witchcraft - appropriate for a sacrifice."

Olga Drebas

LOCATION: Russia

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EMAIL: griffinfly@gmail.com

MEDIA: Photoshop



Olga abandoned IT studies to follow her dream of becoming an artist, and has since freelanced for a host of private clients.

She's worked on tabletop games and matte paintings to creating 3D imagery as an in-house employee for a video game development company.

"I favour simplistic designs over complicated ones," Olga says. "Logic and functionality over style. I like the older versions of Photoshop and the colour green."

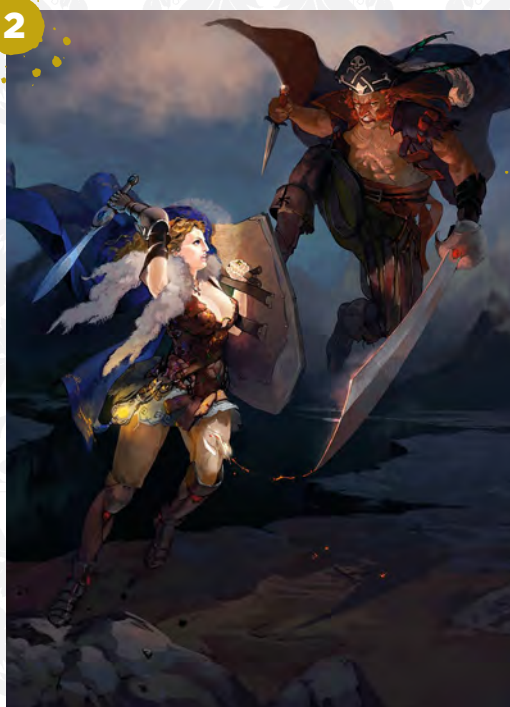
The Moscow-based artist is continuously honing her craft, paying particular attention to oil painting and storytelling, while taking inspiration from the works and memoirs of the old Russian masters.

1



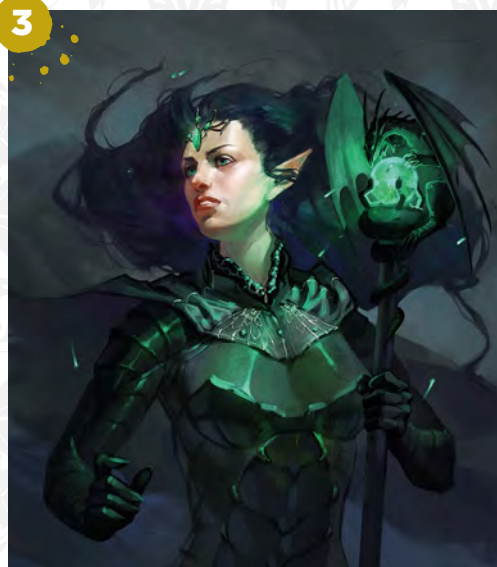
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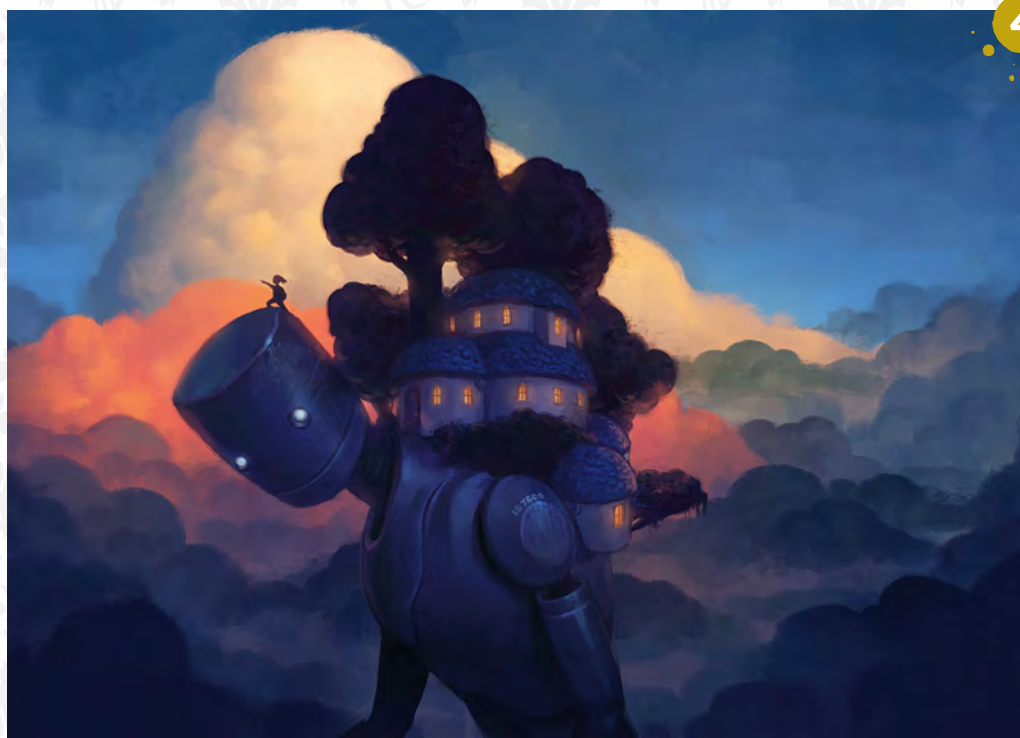


© Milica Nedeljkovic

1 RED HOOD "This was turned into a promo art and a poster for a freelance project I've been working on. It's a post-apocalyptic twist on Red Riding Hood tale in form of a casual hidden-object game."

2 EDGE CHARACTERS "A fellow tabletop games fan commissioned this piece, which is based on a rather loose description of both the characters and the scene. I learned a great deal from the old masters' figurative pieces while working on this one."

3 DESCENDANT OF DRAGONS CHARACTER "This is art for a community activity I was participating in at the time. The contest winner asked to portray their character, which I did. Working for a specific cause motivates me to create better art."



3

Katrina Lin

LOCATION: Canada

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Katrina once doubted her own ability: "Although I always secretly dreamed of being a professional artist," she says, "I never fully committed to the idea, out of fear I wouldn't be good enough."

But after graduating with a "practical, parent-approved, computer science degree" she's returned to her art with renewed focus. Self-taught, she picks up techniques by studying her favourite artists - everyone from old masters to new game-developers. "I just love colours," Katrina says, "and I like to imagine myself in the pictures I paint."

4

1 PLATFORMING REQUIRED AHEAD

"I enjoy jumping puzzles in games, and for this piece I mainly just wanted to paint a place that looked like fun."

2 A LITTLE LOST "In Japan, the Buddhist deity Jizo is revered as the guardian of children, lost souls and travellers. I was keen to show a comforting respite for lost travellers before they continued on their way."

3 ABANDONED CAR "I'm fascinated by the theme of urban decay. It's sad but beautiful."

4 TRAVEL BOT "I always wondered what it'd be like to travel in a giant robot version of an RV."

Sina Pakzad Kasra

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MEDIA: Photoshop



This year Sina earned a place in Digital Art Masters: Volume 9's roll call of 50 featured artists. It's been a long road, taking in a degree in graphic design and a master's in animation.

"Changing direction in my studies meant learning the principals and elegant details of filmmaking and animation. This has given me a whole new viewpoint when creating my art."

The Iranian accepts commissions from all quarters of the entertainment industry, while working on personal pieces he hopes to one day exhibit.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I love how Sina has skilfully added lots of gorgeous loose brushstrokes to build up detail in his images. There's also a Frazetta-esque quality in the composition of the image Nature that draws you wholly into the scene."

Claire Howlett,
Editor

1 NATURE "I always wanted to paint a giant tree, but the opportunity never came up in a job. So one day I finally decided to do it in my own time. And once I start to paint something it often transforms into a more complex composition. I used the lighting to place the focus on the main subject and enhance the mood of the piece."

2 EVE "In this image, I chose to hide the character's face because I wanted to give her a mysterious personality and pique the viewer's curiosity. My lighting and colour palette add to the atmosphere."

3 THE BURNING ASHES "This image came into my head when I was on the road, observing a nearby mountain range. I supplied the narrative, and chose a contrasting colour scheme."





3



SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY



Weta Workshop's Greg Broadmore says he rides an "emotional roller coaster."



Oedipus by Nikolai Aleksander, who is very much against the glamorisation of the "tortured artist."

Method in their madness?

Mind frame Do demons kindle creativity? We invite experts into the world of the tortured artist...

The Madness of Hugo Van Der Goes depicts its subject wide-eyed, dishevelled, with one hand clawing at the other. The artist is sat in the monastery where he sought refuge from his demons.

Van Der Goes – at the time, dean of the painters' guild in Ghent, Belgium – entered Roode Klooster in 1475. Here he suffered a mental breakdown, attempted suicide and died seven years later. He continued to paint throughout this time, but was said to be dissatisfied with his work – the story that's told in Emile Wauters' 19th-century painting.

Vincent Van Gogh wrote in a July 1888 letter to brother Theo: "I am not ill, but without the slightest doubt I'd get that way if

I don't eat well and if I don't stop painting for a few days. As a matter of fact, I'm again pretty nearly reduced to the madness of Hugo Van Der Goes in Wauters' painting."

It was not the only time the Dutch artist compared himself to Van Der Goes. Art critic Jonathan Jones describes Van Gogh – who, missing much of an ear and after a stint in an asylum, is believed to have shot himself and died from his injuries in 1890 – as being "fascinated, and perhaps inspired by, the story of this medieval artist's madness." The most famous of tortured artists, it seems, was himself captivated by a tortured artist. Should we be surprised if the rest of the art world has followed suit?



NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN

Bobby Chiu's happy to enrol with the rest of the students at Schoolism, the online art resource that he helped to set up. But what else can he learn? **Page 23**



STORM IN A PETRI DISH

Comedian Tim Minchin's dinner-party argument with an alternative medicine fan became part of his show. Find out why it's now a graphic novel... **Page 25**



A HAVEN FOR HEAVY METAL

After a busy day working digitally at Weta Workshop, Nick Keller swaps a stylus for a paintbrush and rocks out while creating heavy metal album art. **Page 26**



James Gurney's Sea Monster: the American sees little value in notions of the tortured artist.



Greg Broadmore's brooding piece the Loop was "spurred by hitting a creative low."

"There's some romanticising that goes on about the tortured artist," says Weta Workshop artist Greg Broadmore, "but generally that idea doesn't hold as much water in the world of art for entertainment." While sceptical of such notions, he admits his job can be an "emotional rollercoaster."



"Your art is you, no matter what the subject, and so to put it out there can make you feel vulnerable. We put great pressures on ourselves. Often I'm frustrated or even depressed by my work. I just want it to be better; it's never as good as I want it to be. I don't share that feeling externally very often, so it can weigh me down."

The idea of the tortured artist took root with the Romantics in the early part of the 19th century. Romanticism, which valued subjectivity and individualism above all else, saw madness as a kind of elevated state – a place to unlock hidden genius and uncover profound truths. The madman was someone who adventured into the unknown, the insane artist held up as a hero.

But long before the Romantics, Plato planted the seeds of this idea. The philosopher suggested madness was a "gift of heaven," something which "comes from God, whereas sober sense is merely human." Join the dots between Plato, the Romantic Movement and Van Gogh and you can see

"I'm frustrated or even depressed by my work. I just want it to be better; it's never as good as I want it to be"

how the idea of the tortured artist has grown into the intractable myth it is today.

Nykolai Aleksander – a self-confessed Leonardo da Vinci addict who knows her art history – says, in the past, the artist was a craftsman who didn't enjoy the same social status as is afforded them now. They laboured under ➔



The Madness of Hugo Van Der Goes, by Emile Wauters, features the classic visage of the tortured artist.



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

DR RUTH RICHARDS

The expert says creativity leads to improved not worsened health...

What was the thinking behind the book of essays you edited, *Everyday Creativity*?

I believe there are serious misunderstandings about creativity and mental health that can even be dangerous to people. The real message is about health, not illness – even with a personal or family history of a mood disorder.

What are your thoughts on the condition of madness as an elevated state, just as the Romantics believed?

The message is about moderation, balance, harmony, if you will, between a creative source of inspiring thoughts and the executive functions to use these productively. That is, a balance of divergent thinking and convergent thinking. We found at Harvard Medical School a "creative advantage" that peaks during better functioning times. Yet some people think the sicker the better. Too many people think that therapy might hurt their creativity or they may stop taking very important medications. This is not the way to increase creativity.

Is the idea of a tortured artist, then, something of a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Creativity is seen as healing by many art therapists, expressive artists, humanistic psychologists and multiple others. It might even be preventative for certain persons who are "at risk." So this misunderstanding about tortured artists may not only put people at risk, but also keep them from the treatments that may help them feel immensely better and bring out underlying talents and abilities to contribute to our society.



Ruth leads creativity studies courses at Saybrook University, CA. *Everyday Creativity* is available to buy now.

www.saybrook.edu



Stellar Art Award-winner Nikolai Aleksander is a firm believer in creativity's healing powers – as used by art therapists.



"I sometimes use the anger or frustration at a piece of art or writing," says Greg Broadmore.

➔ pressure – tight budgets, expensive materials, tough working conditions – while commissions and censorship dictated what they could and couldn't paint.

"All in all this hasn't changed that much," Nikolai says. "Many artists continue to fight making a living from their work, and many of the traditional mediums still pose a serious mental health risk."

The German Stellar Art Award-winner stresses there's nothing romantic or glamorous about real mental illness, and working artists today don't have time to pretend otherwise: "It's hard to keep up with workloads and deadlines – something as simple as a cold or flu could upset schedules. Clients expect you to do the work when they need it to be done. If you can't, they'll simply ask someone more reliable."

“Artists almost need to have certain qualities that verge on mental illness, such as obsession”

But are artistic endeavours any more stressful than other professions? A recent study published in the Journal of Psychiatric Research used Swedish health records to identify over a million people diagnosed with various mental illnesses. Researchers compared these “cases” to those from a matched group without psychiatric diagnoses. The study measured the amount of people within each group who had, or recently had, creative occupations.

Field Combat by James Gurney, an artist who says certain obsessive traits should help, not hinder the artist.

The study found that, overall, people in creative professions were no more likely to suffer from a psychiatric disorder than those in the matched group. In fact, people with creative jobs were significantly less likely to be diagnosed with many forms of mental illness.

The study, while not without its flaws, seems to dispel the myth of the tortured artist. However, lead researcher Dr Simon Kyaga said the findings also suggested certain disorders, which were no more likely to occur in creative people, may actually have a positive effect on creativity.

“Artists almost need to have certain qualities that verge on mental illness,”

James Gurney says, “such as obsession, deeply felt emotion, social alienation, and an odd mix of egoism and self-doubt.”



Californian artist James is best known for illustrated book series Dinotopia and a string of best-selling art theory books. He says playing up to the role may have been beneficial for the Romantics in separating what they did from the carpenter, the blacksmith. But he prefers to think of art as a cure for, rather than the cause of, certain troubles.

“The idea of the struggling, tortured, mad genius is a legacy of the Romantic period, and it makes great copy for art historians. But some of that is PR on the part of the artists, and some of it comes from the fanciful notions that grew up long after the facts. But if the tortures of the soul keep someone from producing work, obviously, that's not much help.

“Think Winsor McCay, Arthur Rackham and Milt Kahl: all great artists with bizarre imaginations, who were as reliable and workmanlike as watchmakers.”



Imaginism Studios' Bobby Chiu, who's also worked at Disney and Warner Bros., leads courses in digital painting and creature design.

School of thought

Further education Bobby Chiu counts himself as a student at his online art resource Schoolism



There was a time, Bobby Chiu says, when the quality of art education depended on the standard of the school an artist could attend. He set up

Schoolism to help change that, though his motives weren't entirely altruistic.

"I created Schoolism to help further my own education," the founder of Imaginism Studios says. "I think that's what's made it great. I only invite teachers that I feel can teach not just students but professionals."

Schoolism offers online courses led by Bobby and a roster of big-name artists from the entertainment industry, such as Alex Woo, Sam Nielson and Nathan Fowkes.

Students choose to learn at their own pace – with 100-day self-taught programmes – or with the additional help of personalised video feedback from instructors.

September sees Schoolism go on a world tour, offering live workshops in nine destinations across three continents. "The benefit of the live workshops," Bobby says, "is that you get to meet teachers and ask them questions. It's a whole other experience to learn from the people at the top of their industries. Even for someone like myself, who's been going to these workshops for years, it's inspiring and motivating."

To find out more about the courses on offer, visit www.schoolism.com.



Students can learn the fundamentals of lighting or lighting for story and concept art from Sam Nielson.



Andrew Hou presents a course entitled introduction to digital painting, in which he takes students through Photoshop's core tools and painting techniques.

FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Justin Oaksford
@Justinoaksford

"Sargent study. Missed some basic structural info, but learned a lot about stroke economy!"
http://ifxm.ag/fresh_justin



Alex Heath
@AlexHeathDraws

"Recent Photoshop painting of a human embryo from London's Hunterian Museum."
http://ifxm.ag/fresh_alex



Mike Jasnowski
@MikeJasnowski

"A quick study for Napkin Sketch group."
http://ifxm.ag/fresh_mike



Just finished something you want us to shout about? Send it our way on Twitter (@imaginefx), or find us on Facebook!



Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable
"One of my younger colleagues didn't get the 'not-removing-my-headphones' message, so we had to have an awkward chat"

Chris Oatley on the dos and don'ts of working in an animation studio... Page 60

Win a copy of Procreate!

Competition We're giving away 20 copies of the excellent Procreate 2.1

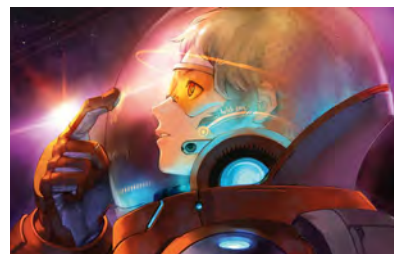
Procreate is the must-have app for artists with an iPad. We've teamed up with developer Savage Interactive to give you the chance to bag a free download of the industry-leading tablet application.

We have 20 copies of latest version Procreate 2.1 to give away. For a chance to win one, just answer the following question:

The name of the developer behind Procreate is...

- A) Savage Interactive
- B) Beastly Entertainment
- C) Wicked Workshop

Please submit your answer online at www.futurecomps.co.uk/ifx-procreate. This competition is open to entries worldwide. The closing date is Wednesday 1 October 2014. For a full set of competition rules go to www.imaginefx.com/comp_rules.



Procreate's colour wheel is just one of the many core painting tools on offer.

Patipat Asavasena (www.asuka111art.com) painted this sci-fi scene in Procreate.

Fair weather friend

Second coming A comic makeover for Tim Minchin's stormy atheist beat poem follows its animated video



Comedian Tim Minchin's poem Storm started life in his stand-up show. It was a 10-minute tirade against 'evidence-free thinking' of all stripes, based loosely on a real life run-in with a vocal fan of homeopathy.

It's a playful account of an evening meal that sees the wine-fuelled Minchin character singing the benefits of humanism to the astrology-loving Storm, although even Tim initially had his doubts about it. "I always wondered if it was funny," he says, "it's barely comedy! It's sort of its own genre."



A dinner party with a few of Tim's friends provided the perfect platform for Storm and her views.



It struck a chord with artist Dan 'DC' Turner and producer Tracy King. Having caught his 2009 show Ready For This? they cornered Tim at a party and suggested animating the song. "Storm is the best summary of the way I feel about the world, about science and rationalism," says DC, "and it needed to be seen as well as heard." Having created an animated film based on the poem for free, DC has just revisited the ode to humanism with a graphic novel, out this October.

"Dan talked about his animation style in terms of it having a jazz, smokey feel," says Tim about the film, which can still be seen on YouTube, "but what I didn't realise is that the book would be such a huge leap in detail and texture."

While Tim admits that Storm may be preaching to the choir, he says that, "What we think we can do, as science communicators, or anyone that cares about this stuff, is get the swing voters."

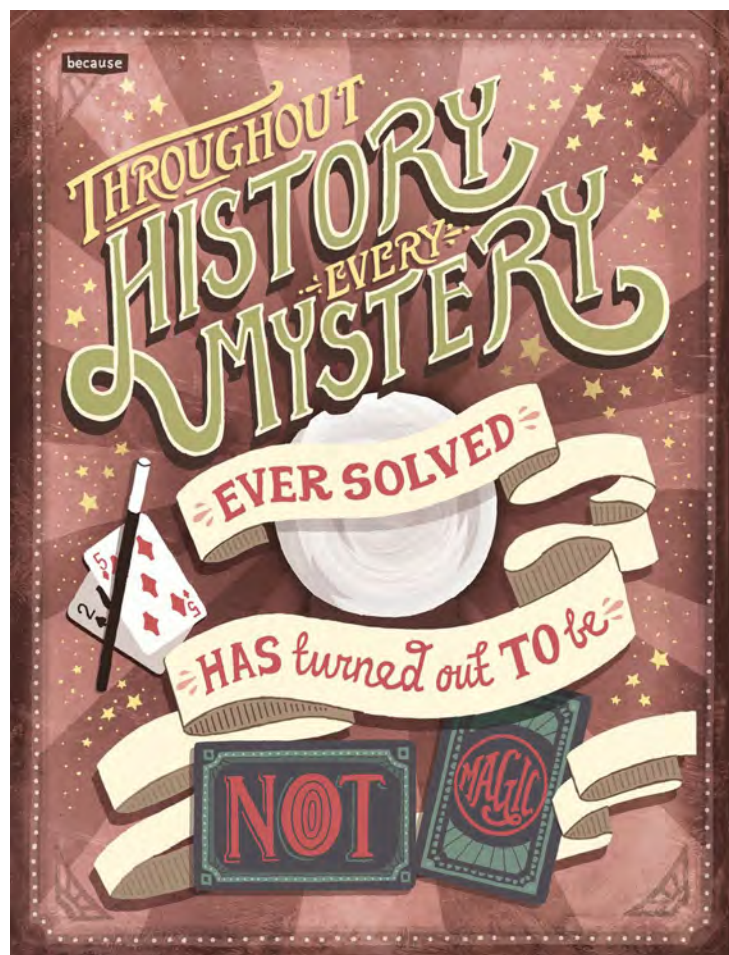
Storm is on sale this October. Find out more here: <http://ifxm.ag/storm-ixf>.



Tim's epic poem has been adapted to the graphic novel format, with his words either appearing within panels or, as in this case, over one large illustration.



Tim appears as himself in the novel, reacting to Storm's 'hippy' diatribe against science and medicine in the 21st century.





In my rented studio, this old CD collection battles for space with oil paints, various liquids, laptop and my Wacom. It's probably not the ideal combination.



My portable painting easel for field trips.

Every studio needs a square of synthetic turf as a carpet! I just wish mine covered the entire floor. Concrete can get a bit hard underfoot.

My balanced wooden palette I brought back from Florence has served me well over the past few years. I tend not to try and keep mixed oil paint between sessions, because my erratic schedule means it can be days before I get back to it.

Nick Keller

Time share The Weta artist shows us around not one but two studios, and previews forthcoming projects



My workspaces are a somewhat schizophrenic scattering: there's my PC workstation at Weta

Workshop, a similar but more humble set-up at home, and a rented studio space at a local communal art centre in Wellington City.

The day job as a concept designer – mainly for film and TV – requires me to

almost exclusively create digital art. My painting studio caters to my love of traditional art. This means I can be working on a personal piece, or freelance projects such as heavy metal album covers. I can be found here at all hours on weekends and late on weekday evenings after finishing at Weta.

My setup is constantly evolving as I adapt my workflow. At the moment, a repurposed office desk with makeshift extension serves

as a handy junk-accumulator. I can access said junk while painting at my main easel.

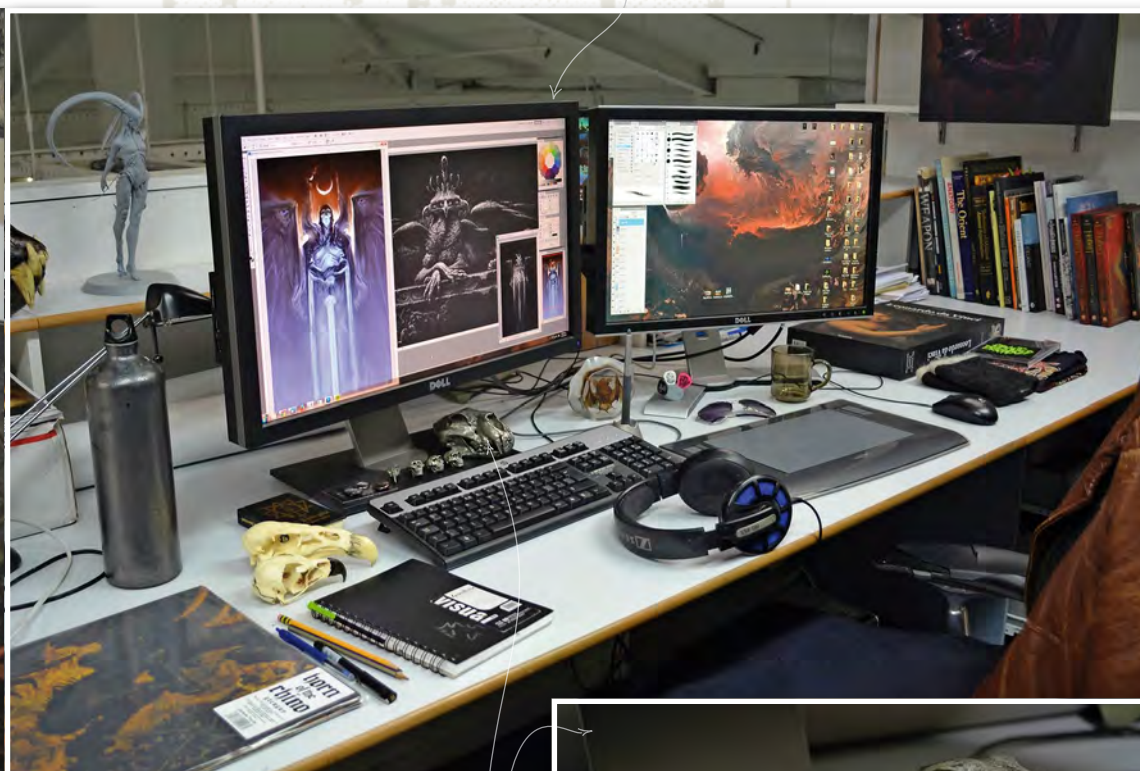
Unless I'm approaching a deadline, I'm not particularly good at working from home. I find myself much more focused when I have a dedicated workspace, absent of distractions. Generally speaking, I'll start an oil painting project in sketch form, then mock up some Photoshop compositions, colour palettes and so on. Quite often

Artist news, software & events

Here are two recently finished album cover pieces I produced in tandem. Usually I like to have multiple works on the go, so as to keep up momentum and avoid any lull between projects, which seems to inevitably happen anyway.



This is my Weta Workshop workstation. It's a PC with dual monitor and Wacom tablet setup on the mezzanine floor above the design room. The rather large expanse of tabletop seems to encourage a lateral spread of my junk. Pictured on-screen is a digital mock-up for a personal oil painting I'm planning out.



My exceedingly comfy reading/drawing chair. My partner claims it's hers and as a consequence it's made the journey between our two studios a number of times.

My progressively evolving collection of pewter skulls. Not quite in evolutionary order.



My temporary abode of recently finished album art projects that are looking for a more permanent home.



I accomplish this by staying after hours at my Weta PC.

When I'm ready to move onto the canvas I migrate to the studio. Until recently, it was a bomb site of reference print outs, stuck all over the place. A studio laptop has helped cut down on unnecessary printing.

I'm still trying to find the sweet spot when it comes to taking a digital mock-up far enough to adequately inform my final piece, without overworking it and merely recreating it in paint. The thing that fascinates, satisfies and infuriates me about the art form is the evolutionary journey of a painting.

Nick is a senior concept artist at Weta Workshop in Wellington, New Zealand. Visit www.nickkellerart.com to see more of his art.

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK



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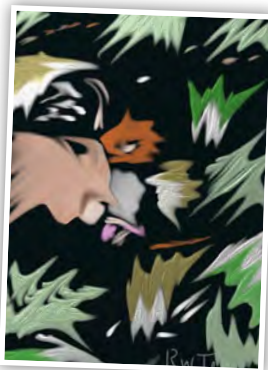
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Feel the energy!

I turned 60 last year and decided to go back to doing what I love, so I set up a room for my art studio. My seven-year-old grandson was visiting and explained how I could paint on my iPad using ArtRage. After the first try I fell in love, and I haven't picked up a brush since.

I've been a shaman practitioner for over 30 years and use energy patterns to connect to my students and clients to find what blocks them from moving forward. I'm sending you a few samples of individual energy pattern paintings. Thank you for allowing me to share.

Ravenwolfe Teu, via email



Here's an example of an energy pattern that Ravenwolfe has visualised using ArtRage.

Claire replies Thank you for sending these in, Ravenwolfe. It's not every day I get an email from a shaman! These energy patterns are a fascinating insight into how you use art to communicate with your clients and visually explain their issues and experiences.

Mourning the forum

ImagineFX is a fantastic magazine – it's hands down the best magazine for artists on the market. It was one of the factors that got me back into art after a very long hiatus. The second, however, were your forums.

I'm very disappointed with the recent decision to close down the forums section of ImagineFX.com. A casualty of this closure was the vibrant, helpful community made up of professional and aspiring artists from every corner of the world that contributed, critiqued and encouraged. And make no mistake about it: this was a heavy casualty. There was a sense of community that I associated with ImagineFX, which no longer exists.

The reason I visited the magazine website so often was the forums; without them, I'm afraid I have no real reason to return. The possibility of interaction is gone, the friendly banter is gone, as is the constructive advice that over the years has influenced me



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 112?

Visit our shop at <http://ifxm.ag/ifxstore> for details on this edition and other special offers, too.



Even though our forum has closed, it won't stop you from creating great fantasy and sci-fi art.

and helped shape my art. I'm not sure what was behind the decision, but whatever it was, it has created a void.

I know that the forums have migrated elsewhere and with them the many acquaintances I made over the past few years. I'll go there instead of ImagineFX's website, but now we're an isolated community as opposed to being part of something bigger. ImagineFX remains a beautiful, shiny car, but the decision to close the forums has put an ugly dent in its side.

Antonio Fernandez, via email

What I loved about ImagineFX was the focus on the art community. The forums were the biggest reason I chose to subscribe to ImagineFX magazine over other competing magazines. They gave hobbyist artists such as myself the chance to be featured in the magazine.

The community on the forums was like no other forums I'd ever seen. All of the members on the forums were dedicated to their art and magazine. But now that the forums are gone, there's no longer anything that makes ImagineFX stand out from the rest of the magazines on the shelves.

ImagineFX needs to reconsider its readers. The forums were never advertised in the several years I was there as a member. The reason the forums failed to provide any profit to ImagineFX was at the fault of the magazine, not users. Consider ImagineFX magazine one subscriber less. Bad move.

Madi, via email

Claire replies Hello Antonio and Madi. We miss the forum too. It certainly was a great place for people to learn and share their art. The decision to close the forum wasn't ours to make. It was out of our hands. The magazine is still going strong and my team and I work very hard to bring you the best magazine that we can each month. I do believe that what we offer is completely unlike any other digital art magazine.

The good news is that the great community you speak of still exists, just in another place. The ImagineFX forum moderators have created their own forum, so please go and join the community at <http://cgartnexus.com>, where you'll be looked after by Kaz, Volsupa and Banj. Please send them our regards.



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A chance to paint the cover

I'm a freelance illustrator and for the past three years I've subscribed to ImagineFX magazine.

The first issue I bought was the Star Wars issue. I was on a beach in Morocco and after reading it I had to get back home and start painting digitally. This magazine made me take my art seriously and opened up a whole new world of possibilities through the digital medium.

I'm writing to see if ImagineFX would be interested in doing a cover art competition for a future issue. We see many talented established artist contributing each month. There's so much undiscovered talent out there waiting for such an opportunity. I believe that the subject should reflect what the magazine is about – fantasy and sci-fi – and combine the two. It should be something original, rather than fan art.

Thanks for such a great magazine and for taking the time to read this.
Randy Debono, via email

Claire replies Thanks for emailing in, Randy. I love the idea for a cover competition, so I'll keep it in mind for a later issue. However, if there are any artists out there who think their art should grace the cover on ImagineFX, don't wait for a competition – just email me!



Our Star Wars issue from autumn 2011 inspired Randy to start painting digitally.



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Issue 112

September 2014

The Pre-Raphaelite art movement provides the inspiration for Corrado Vanelli whose painting graces our cover, and Katarina Sokolova who reimagines Ophelia to stunning effect. Elsewhere, Donglu Yu constructs a city using textures, Mike Corriero concepts a menagerie of fantasy beasts, and Wylie Beckert translates her digital skills to traditional media.



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Issue 111

August 2014

Jeff Simpson's eerie cover image sets the tone for this issue, as we reveal the secrets to painting dark, unsettling art with Anthony Scott Waters, Xavier Collette, and the man behind many iconic horror posters, Graham Humphreys. We also talk to Les Edwards, whose fantasy and horror work is instantly recognisable.



Issue 110

July 2014

Find out why so many artists, including John Howe, Lorland Chen and Brom, are attracted to illustrating stories that have passed down the centuries. We explore the comic art of Claire Wendling, Cynthia Sheppard brings a Greek goddess to life, and Tran Nguyen reinterprets the classic damsel in distress narrative.



Issue 109

June 2014

On Batman's 75th anniversary, we look at the dark art of Gotham's infamous vigilante, with imagery from Jock, Frank Miller, Neal Adams and more, while DC Comics' Ken Lashley creates our cover. We also explore Simone Bianchi's sketchbook, draw a Wolverine fight scene and find out how a Fables cover is painted.



Issue 108

May 2014

This issue we explore the art of the Seven Kingdoms with our Game Of Thrones special. Mélanie Delon paints Daenerys Targaryen for our cover and we talk to the key creatives on the show, and even chat with its creator George RR Martin about his vision for the stories. All this, plus even more great art, tips and workshops!



CATCH UP ON WHAT YOU'VE MISSED!



Issue 107 April 2014

By adding in beautifully detailed Taiwanese aboriginal costumes, cover artist Han-Yuan Yu has given his manga art a distinct look. Christopher Moeller paints comics in a traditional way, Serge Kolesov depicts a mermaid from a new perspective, and Wayne Reynolds tells us how he turned a boring art job into something fun!



Issue 106 March 2014

Celebrating the power of book illustration, we speak to Cory Godbey about his ethereal art and to Tony DiTerlizzi about his motion picture-inspiring art. Cory and Tony give us tutorials, too, on creature design and book covers, respectively. There's a studio profile on Tor Books, and a look at Brian Froud's latest work.



Issue 105 February 2014

We talk to the artists behind some of the most beautiful female paintings in the universe in our pin-up special - from a sassy roller-girl covergirl to amazing art from Adam Hughes, Serge Birault and Sorayama. Elsewhere, we delve into the world of tattoo art, and give advice on artist's block and softening your painting style.



Issue 104 January 2014

This month's artists will help you push your painting skills into untapped areas, with advice on creating art from smoke brushes, developing your artistic voice, plus our traditional art workshop on painting a frog princess! Simon Dominic revives an old concept, and we reveal the winners of this year's Rising Stars contest.



Issue 103 Christmas 2014

Discover the art skills you'll need to break into the competitive video games industry, as we speak to the people behind The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Remember Me and Mass Effect. Traditional fantasy artist Tom Kidd paints a book cover, and Dave Kendall puts Manga Studio 5 to the test.



Issue 102 December 2013

Traditional skills meet digital methods in Jean-Sébastien Rossbach's cover art, which also heralds a new section in the magazine that's devoted to bringing you the best in traditional fantasy art. We talk to Daren Bader and Keith Thompson about their inspirations, while Jim Pavlec brings a gothic creation to life.



Issue 101 November 2013

We boldly go into a galaxy of space art, highlighting the artists who made their name in the genre and talking to the digital painters who were inspired by them. Our workshops section reveals how to paint an epic environment, alien figures and use references, while our Q&A section covers horror, skin and futuristic hair styles!



Issue 100 October 2013

Come join the party and celebrate 100 issues of ImagineFX! Jason Chan, Raymond Swanland, Marta Dahlig, Dan LuVisi and Genzoman head up our workshop section, we reveal which cover you liked the best, look back over the history of the magazine, and present the results of your 100 favourite artists as voted for by you, dear reader!

Artist Q&A

GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS? LET US EASE YOUR ART-ACHE AT **HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM**



The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Nick Harris
English artist Nick moved across to a digital canvas in 2000 after 18 years working with traditional methods. He works mainly on children's illustrations for books.
www.nickillus.com

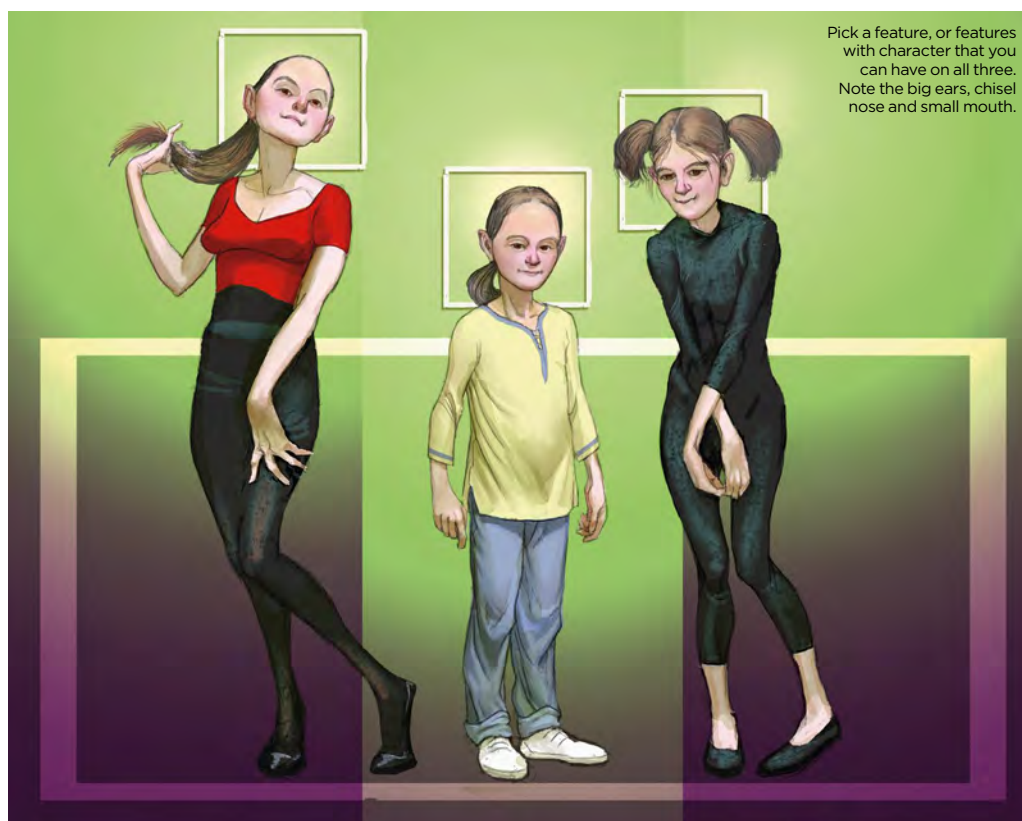
Tony Foti
Tony is a full-time freelance illustrator based in California who contributes to D&D and Fantasy Flight Games' Star Wars and The Lord of the Rings lines.
www.tonyfotiart.com

Sara Forlenza
Sara's a freelance illustrator living in northern Italy, where she works on book covers, digital card products and role-playing games. She's also a keen PC gamer.
www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com

John Silva
Originally from Portugal, John is a self-taught freelance artist who's living in Ireland. He's worked for companies such as Kabam, Gameloft, Applibot and Microsoft Xbox Live.
www.johnsilva.deviantart.com

Mark Molnar
Freelancer Mark works as a concept and visual development artist for the entertainment industry and freelances for film, game and animation companies.
www.markmolnar.com

Don Seegmiller
An artist and instructor who's based at Utah Valley University, Don is the author or co-author of five digital painting books, including Advanced Painter Techniques.
www.seegmillerart.com



Question
How can I draw three girls who look like sisters, and avoid them from looking the same?
Anthony Dufraigne, US

Answer
Nick replies

All we're talking about here is family resemblance. I need to convey the similarity of features – enough to show that certain individuals have come from the same gene pool. Let's take three sisters as requested, and naturally avoid identical triplets because that dodges the question.

I'm looking to deliver similarities, not perfectly matching features. So I need to be aware that general build and physique plays a significant part, unless I need to deliberately contrast the individuals for some reason. A fat versus thin, or short



Distinctive facial features such as a high forehead can be applied to all three characters, reinforcing the family connection.

versus tall sister for example (which may be attributed to the builds of two parents). I have a tendency towards caricature, but that should help here.

Assuming these are the first characters I'm creating (in other words, there are no parents or other relatives to refer to), then an easy way to begin is to decide on a prominent feature or face shape. Do they have a large or small nose, prominent ears or a lantern jaw? What shape are their eyes? A character's eyes are always important because they're one of the first things that a viewer will look at.

Step-by-step: Capture a family resemblance



1 I'm painting two sisters of similar age and one several years younger, and need to incorporate developmental differences. Features tend to become more pronounced with age. I can give the two similarly aged sisters similar features, but then afford them different personalities through body language.



2 Working in ArtRage, I block in colour behind some sketchy drawing of the trio using the Chalk tool. Skin pallor and hair colour represent two more 'likeness tools' I can use. Hair type is another. I opt for wavy hair, but being sisters they'll want their own styles. It's about trying to imbue individual personalities.



3 I consolidate things, working up details and checking I'm not erring towards individuality at the expense of the family likeness. I strive for a balance. For this example the sisters are all in the same piece with the same lighting. If I were showing them in separate scenes, I'd make the resemblance more obvious.

Question

Can you give me some tips for creating a set of cool brushes for painting vegetation?

Michael Jackson, Wales



Answer

John replies



When creating custom brushes in Photoshop your main aim is for each brush to leave an easily identifiable shape or mark. If you're able to generate a crisp silhouette, then your viewer will be able to identify what you've painted from a distance. They'll also be able to distinguish between similar shapes, such as tree leaves and petals on a flower.

Always use a canvas size of 1,000x1,000 pixels when creating a custom brush. This will enable you to scale down your brushes while retaining their crispness. Scaling up a small brush shape will result in a pixelated mess.

If you're using an established brush stroke or photo texture to create your brush, always turn it

to 100 per cent black against 100 per cent white. If you can't do this, at least try to reduce the levels of grey. The next step is to introduce some details, such as dents, nicks, scratches, holes, or another shape within the brush shape.

Finally, you should try to be creative with the setting in the Brush dialog (the shortcut is F5). I love adjusting the Scattering and Shape Dynamics: have fun tweaking the minimum diameter value. Then, under Angle Jitter in Control, set the brush to Direction. If you then click Brush Tip Shape you can change its shape, which can produce pleasing results, as can adjusting the Spacing setting, which is key to control the repetition of your brush's shape when you use it.



Here are the settings I use to quickly create visually interesting vegetation. Notice how the shape is still readable, even when it's duplicated and grouped.

Artist's secret

ADD QUICK AND EASY TEXTURES
If you make one big simple shape – let's say a triangle – but don't want to paint in details, then go to the Brush panel, tick the Double Brush tab and select a texture brush.

Question

What do I need to bear in mind when painting a porous object that's wet?

Eric Hands, Germany

Answer

Nick replies



Textiles and other porous materials tend to look more obviously different when they become wet compared to hard surfaces, whereas waterproof surfaces may either become dotted with water droplets. Fabrics and other absorbent surfaces often show their wetness by a change in tone. A lot of fabrics tend to look darker where they have been made wet, but like every rule there will be exceptions. Let's take biscuits as an example (always a pleasure, especially if you're a self-confessed dunker like me when you have a cup of coffee in the other hand). Ginger nuts are a great example. If you dip an edge into the drink long enough, you should see a darkening in tone (but don't leave it too long or you lose portions into the drink). It may also glint where the light catches it if very wet.

When it comes to fabrics, the best advice I can give is to always look at real material to see what happens. That's not an invitation to throw water over people without asking, of course! Thick fabrics become very heavy when soaked and their form shows that. Patterned fabrics may display different levels of reaction to the liquid dependent on an area's particular qualities. This fabric may become translucent (partially see-through). The effects aren't always glaringly obvious, so try not to overdo it.

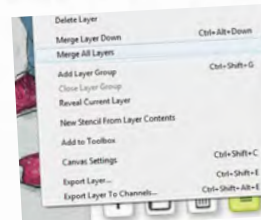


The 'wet' effects may be a bit too subtle, but I've darkened some biscuit edges and the character's jeans, as well as making his T-shirt partially see-through in places.

Artist's secret

MERGING MOVES

If you stack up the layers, it's easy to become bogged down because you have to navigate through them all. Merge layers whenever you can. It'll make you more decisive and proactive.



A strong light needs to affect all elements in the composition, if it's to look realistic.

Question

I'd like some help placing a strong white light source in my art

Freckle Johnson, Spain

Answer

Sara replies



You'll need to keep a few things in mind, if your composition is going to feature a correctly depicted bright light source.

First, the colour of the light will affect the colours throughout the scene – even, perhaps surprisingly, the shadows.

The introduction of a white source of light means that the hue values will be pure and saturated, just as they would be in bright sunlight. It's for this reason that neon lights are regularly used in art schools: they have a minimal effect on colours, compared to other sources of artificial lights.

I choose a very pale blue for the light's actual colour. This will enhance the shiny appearance of the elements in my composition, such as the silk dress, the sword hilt and the character's hair.

Next, I consider that a strong light casts very dark shadows. I subsequently take care over the placement of the light source, so that the cast shadows will help me to better define the shapes in my scene. Indeed, painting these shadows correctly means that even the most outlandish of fantasy characters will have an air of credibility about them.



Question

Can you help me choose the right colours to paint metal please?

Jose Castillo, Canada

Answer

John replies



The environment that surrounds the metal object is almost as important as the depiction of the object itself.

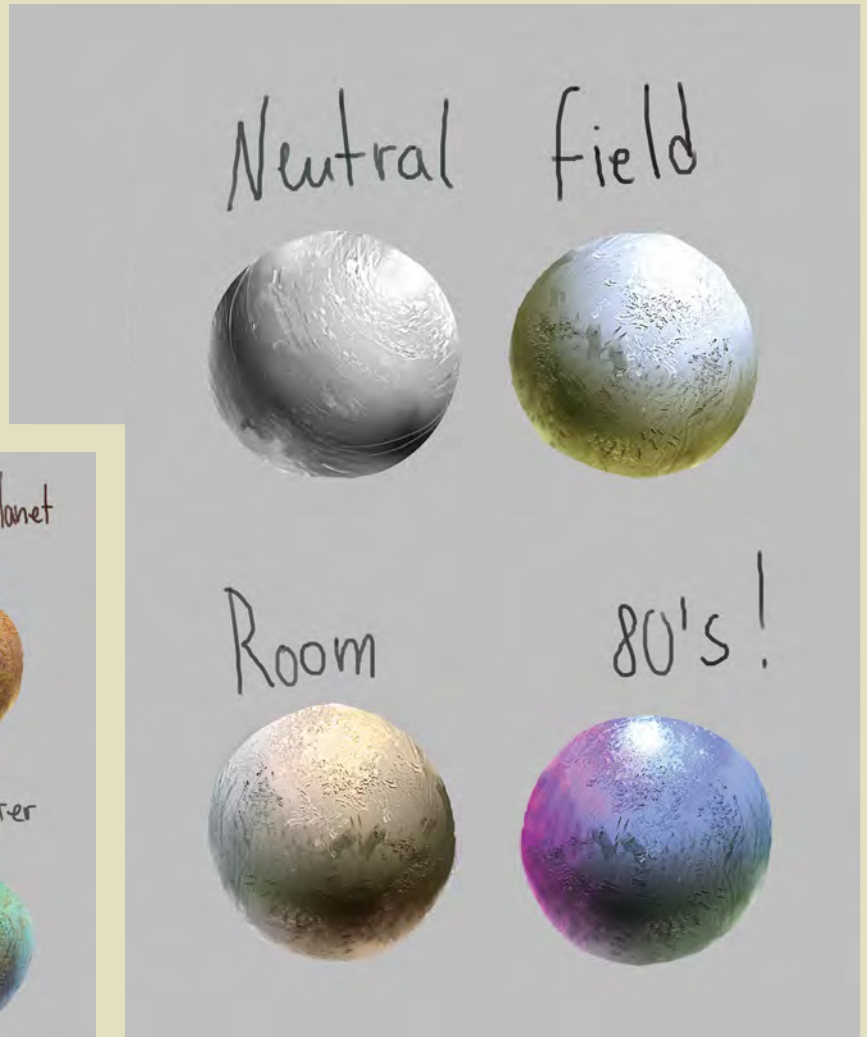
It's actually that simple. If a metal ball is in a field of grass with a blue sky then it would be green at the bottom and blue on top. If a metal ball is in a room that's lit by both an artificial light and natural light through a window, and the room is beige, then it would be light brown at the bottom, yellow on top and a desaturated blue on the side from the window. If a metal ball is depicted as if it were in an 80s sci-fi movie, then it would probably have a cold blue spotlight on top and neon light on the side.

I could go on all day, but I think you have plenty examples there! The environment has a significant effect on metal, even if it's painted metal. Now, the second thing that's crucial to painting a metal object is to desaturate whatever colours from the environment are affecting it. This means that most colours will become quite cold; our eyes see the colours going towards a blue-ish tone, even though that's not what's really happening. I then apply a few dabs of blue tints with a texture brush.

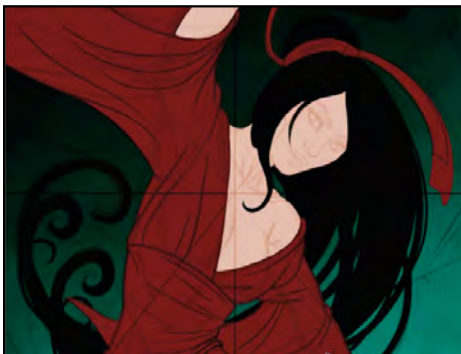
Finally, don't forget about rust, if appropriate. Whatever the surroundings, rust will always have a brown, red or yellow appearance.

Here are four common environmental settings that would affect metal. Placing another material alongside a metallic object would reinforce the effect.

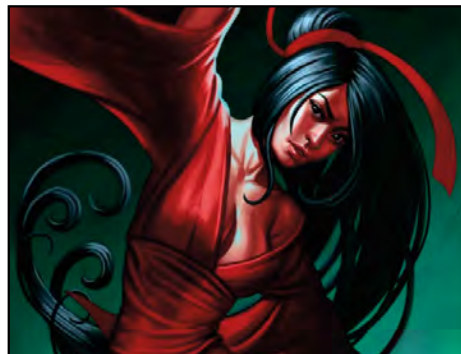
Notice how the rusting metal has a vibrant appearance. The top one is from another planet and the bottom one from the ocean.



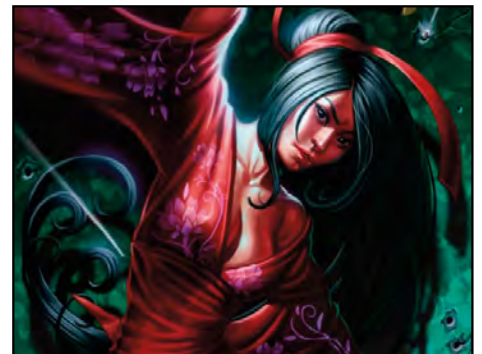
Step-by-step: Fill your scene with light



1 Once I finish the sketch of the image I start laying down the flat colours. I save myself a bit of time by ensuring that they're slightly saturated. During this part of the painting process I decide on the location of my light source. Then I'm ready to begin rendering the composition.



2 Because I've chosen to place my light source at the top of the picture, my objects will cast long and dark shadows. Furthermore, because the light that I've chosen is very pale, cold and strong, my shadows will be warm and dark and very definite.



3 Once the rendering and the details are completed, I add small touches of green light, reflected from the wall, on to the dress of the character. Finally, I emphasise the light source's strength by adding a bright halo around the surfaces already affected by it.

Question

Have you got any advice for designing a futuristic gown?

Baz Furlong, England



Answer

Tony replies



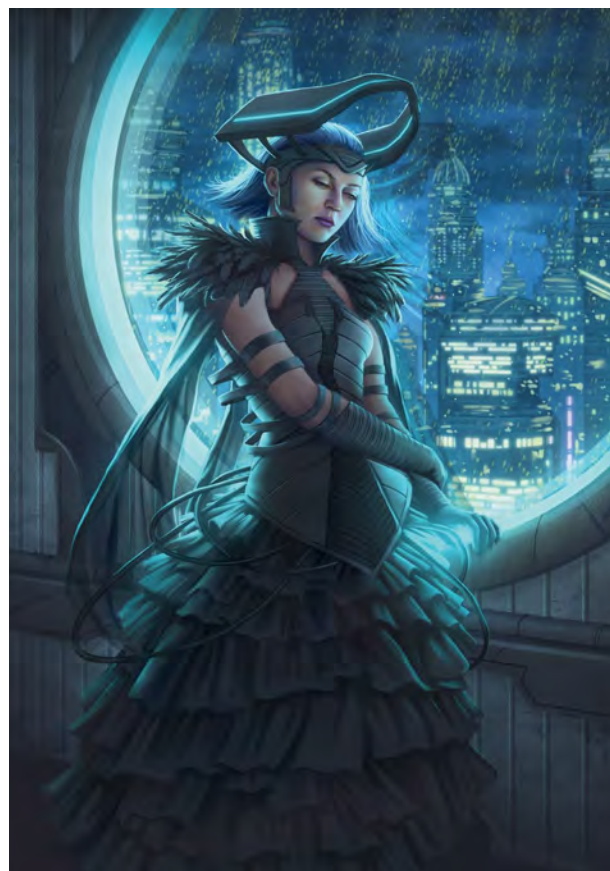
One of the most important aspects of any science fiction or fantasy painting is how everything has been designed.

People love those genres because they offer a glimpse into other worlds, and when you take the time to design things such as clothing and architecture it enriches the whole experience. It just so happens that designing clothing is one of my favourite parts of the artistic process, so these are steps I go through fairly often.

Before drawing anything, of course, you need to know the world you're working in. Is it a grim future? An idealistic one? Has

technology augmented reality to the point where everything is automated, or has society crumbled upon itself and now the plasma dome is all that stands between us and a pulsing, radioactive sky? These are the sort of things you need to know before exploring how the citizens of Futuretown 20XX ought to dress.

For something as specific as a single gown, though, we need to understand the person we're tailoring for, as well as the world in general. The key is to try out a lot of different thumbnails, getting out as many ideas as you can and continually checking them against the overall theme.



The final illustration is in three-quarter view so the shapes can be understood. Anything that's perfectly straight-on or profile will leave out necessary information.

Artist's secret



FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT

When designing something futuristic and avant-garde, the last thing you want is for the outfit to look like something you'd see on the street. Get outside of your comfort zone to create shapes that feel strange and unexpected.

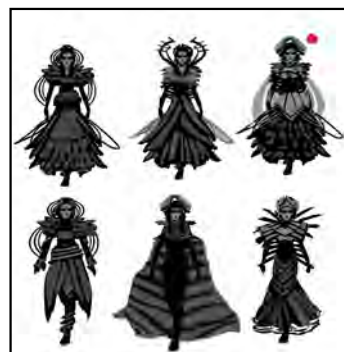
Step-by-step: Start simple and build up

Powerful Mature
Regal Elegant
Opulent Futuristic
Avante Garde
Beautiful Exotic
Other Worldly
Sharp Clean
Pristine Synthetic/
Organic

1 Is your character rich, middle class, poor? Artistic? Reserved? Overtly sexual? Just like in the real world, how a person dresses can tell you a lot about their story. Create a list of adjectives you would like to see conveyed in your final design, and keep them in mind as you draw. Doing this will help you find your way when you come to forks in the road.



2 I start with a base silhouette and draw on top of it, only focusing on the outline. By keeping things simple, I can quickly experiment with a lot of different ideas. Often I'll use the edge to indicate something specific such as a frilly skirt, but other times I'm just drawing in triangles to see what my brain creates from the abstract shapes.



3 Once you have enough thumbnails that work, separate them from the rest and start adding in a second value. My usual approach is to create a new layer over the silhouettes and lock it so the outside edges remain true to the base. Let your mind fill in the details, always checking back in with your adjectives to make sure the concept is moving in the right direction.

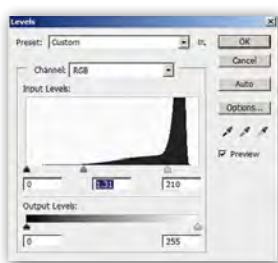


4 With the major shapes in the thumbnails defined, choose the one that best exemplifies the feeling you're looking for. Separate and enlarge it, turn down the Opacity of the layer, create a new layer on top of it, then start sketching over the two-tone study. You can then try out different colours beneath the line work, although for this example the dress is black.

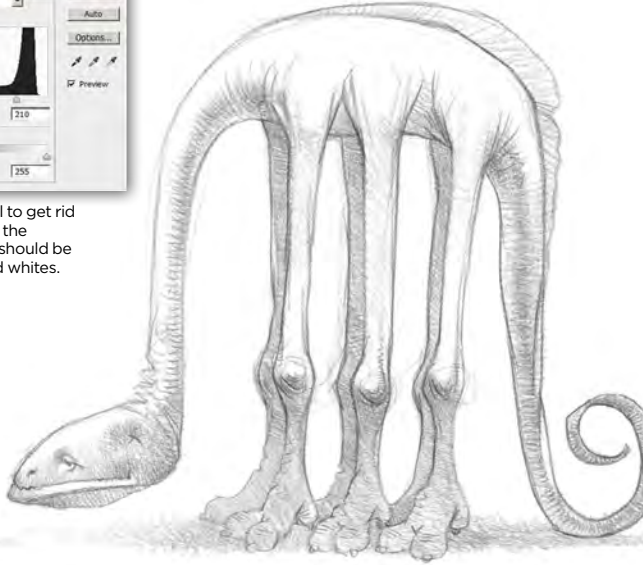
Question

Can you give me advice on scanning a pencil sketch into Photoshop?

Flossy, Bulgaria



I use the Levels tool to get rid of the black lines in the sketch. The sketch should be mid-tone greys and whites.



Answer

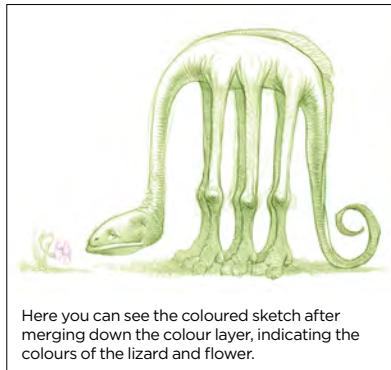
Don replies



Colourising a scanned pencil sketch to get rid of the black lines can save an artist lots of work and aggravation. Dark, black lines are hard to paint over while maintaining the sketch. There's an easy way to colour and soften those black lines.

I open a sketch in Photoshop and use the Image>Adjustments>Levels menu commands to maximise the white and minimise the black. I move the white adjustment marker to the left so the lightest grey areas become white. I then move the mid-value adjustment marker to the left so the black lines become light grey.

To add colour to the lines of the sketch I create a new layer and set the blending mode to Color. I fill this layer with an olive



Here you can see the coloured sketch after merging down the colour layer, indicating the colours of the lizard and flower.

green, which will be the eventual colour of the lizard. I use a brush to paint pink over the small flower.

I Merge Down the colour layer and save the image. The sketch has lighter values and the colours are closer to those that will be used in the painting.

Artist's secret

BLEND ON!

There are several additional Blending Modes that work as well but with somewhat different results. Color Burn will give a coloured sketch that's darker. Soft Light will give a more subtle effect with a bit more grey. Try additional Blending Modes for different looks.



Question

Please help me paint a beard

Jen Bethany, US



Maintain the direction of the beard hair with your brushstrokes, and build up from the bigger shapes towards the single hairs and highlights.

Answer

Mark replies



There's an easy approach that you can take to painting a beard, or any type of facial hair. Instead of trying to depict individual hairs, squint and simplify it to its overall shape. Approach it like any other solid object first. Once you've painted in the main shadows and lights, slowly break it up into smaller sections.

Keep your edges soft where the hairs end or start, and create harder edges where the edges align with the direction of the hair section you're painting, such as below the moustache. You don't have to detail everything: reduce the definition in your shadows and handle them like visual noise. Then focus on applying fine detailing within highlighted areas, where you can also introduce much sharper lines. One nice touch is to add extra highlights and glow to the edges of the facial hair, especially if you have strong back- or ambient light around your character.

After producing a quick line-work sketch, I move straight into colours and block in the main shapes with a bigger brush. I lay down the main values first and then slowly build up the details. This helps me to focus on the main features of the face: the eye-nose-mouth triangle and the prominent beard.



Start with bigger brushstrokes to build up the beard's volume (1); enhance the shadows, light and extra forms with more textured brushes (2); then paint directional highlights with a simple Round brush (3).

Question

Can you help me paint a noble-looking character?

Kurt McCready, Canada



Answer

Mark replies



Painting a noble character depends on the context. Your chosen setting may feature a lot of cultural differences, but also a lot of similarities that have their roots in history. In essence, richer people can afford to buy more high-quality clothing and accessories – which are obvious status symbols – and you could choose to reflect this in your art. There was a time when patterned fabrics were created by hand, and certain clothing dyes were expensive to produce, so only noble figures were able to afford such clothing.

In this character sketch I'm depicting a medieval duke who travels to the Middle East to trade. I'm not going to paint a fully

detailed illustration, but rather simply capture the key elements of the character. After quickly blocking in the silhouette of the character, I move straight into colours using highly saturated red, purple and yellow/orange for the golden parts. I want to build on the feel of stability that I create with the triangle shape of his cape, so I divide my main values into an even mid-range (the cape) and a darker range (upper body and legs) to create even more balance.

After finishing the rough painting stage I add some photo textures to bring a bit more realistic detail to the character. It's during this final stage that I add historically accurate patterns to most of the surfaces and clothing materials.

Historically, saturated colours were always associated with higher social status.



The posture of a character can tell a lot about their social status. Using a triangle as the main shape suggests stability, while a head that's pointing upward suggests an air of superiority.

Question

How can I paint something that's moving fast?

Jessica Stevens, England



The blurred background and movement of the character's dress, hair and arms is balanced by the stillness of her face, which becomes the focal point.

Answer

Tony replies



Something special happens when a still, two-dimensional image can create a sense of motion in the viewer's mind. It can be a tricky feeling to reproduce, but I'll use this Legend of the Five Rings piece to illustrate some ways to go about it.

If this is a figurative piece, you'll want the pose to be dynamic. If there's a lot of movement throughout your composition, I suggest creating a still section that will act as your focal point. When only one area is in motion, such as a rocket punch or roundhouse kick towards the camera, that section will become a strong focal point. On the other hand, an illustration full of moving objects will draw the audience into whatever parts of the piece are inert.

Fast movement looks blurry to the naked eye, so keep the edges softer in areas of high speed. Take short-exposure camera images: the faster the shutter, the sharper the edges are on moving objects. With a fast-enough camera, even pouring water can look frozen with crisp shapes. Softness implies motion.



The circular design of the character's pose takes the viewer's eye around the image.

Artist's secret

CREATE EDGE CONTRAST

If you want to reinforce the implied speed of whatever's moving in your image, have things that are relatively still near the motion blur. Seeing the contrast in edges will draw attention to the difference in velocity.

Question

How can I paint a glowing moon behind the wing of a flying monster?

Sue Age, England



Answer

Don replies



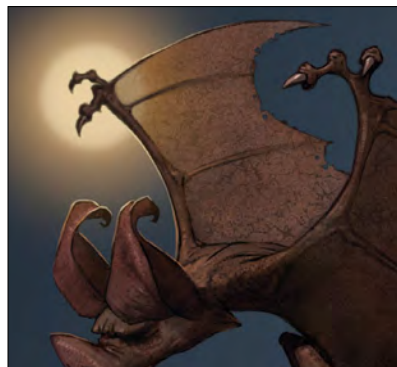
For this question, I imagine the wing of a bat. The bat's arm and elongated fingers run along the length of the wing, and these are solid areas that light won't penetrate. In contrast, any strong light source behind the wing's thin membrane will be noticeable.

To help me achieve a realistic effect, I'll make use of Photoshop's layer styles and Opacity settings. I start by painting a bright circular moon, and then create a realistic-looking glow effect using Gaussian Blur, before adjusting the Opacity. Using multiple layers enables me to recreate the fading effect of the glow in the night sky.

Next it's just a matter of showing moonlight through the bat's wings. This is achieved by the logical use of layers – bearing in mind the bat's arm and fingers, which will block the moon's glow. As a finishing touch, I take into account how the membrane affects the light's quality.



The painting shows a simple method of painting a glowing moon. The key to success is using multiple Screen layers of varying opacity and blur.

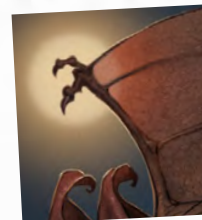


To add more realism to the image, paint rim lighting on the edges of the creature closest to the glowing moon.

Artist's secret

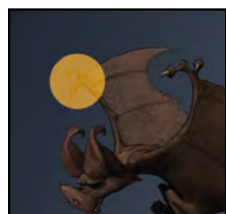
ADD NATURAL COLOUR

Light shining through tissue will change colour, just like when shining a flashlight through fingers creates orange skin. For a more natural-appearing light when shining through tissue, use the Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation sliders to add colour into the bat's wing membrane.



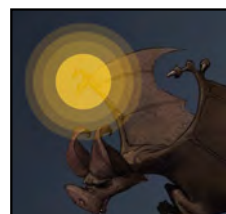
Step-by-step: Depict realistic moonlight

- 1 Create a new layer for the moon and with the Elliptical Marquee tool, hold the Shift key so that your selection is a perfect circle. Using the Paint Bucket Tool, fill the circle with a dark yellow/orange colour.



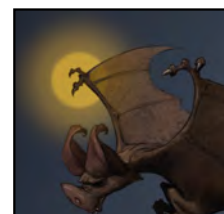
Change the Blending Mode of this moon layer to Screen. Name the layer Moon. Duplicate the layer two or three times for the glow.

- 2 Scale each glow layer so it's larger than the moon layer. Make the glow layers progressively larger than the one underneath. Add Gaussian Blur to slightly soften the moon layer. Use larger amounts



of Gaussian blur on the glow layers. The top layer should have the most blur. Vary the Opacity of the glow layers so they fade into the night sky.

- 3 Group all the moon and glow layers. Merge the group into one layer. Load a selection of the bat layer. Cut away the moon and glow layer overlapping the bat. Paste the cut portion of the moon layer



into a new layer. Lower the Opacity of the new layer so it appears behind the bat wing. Erase the bat's arm so the glow shows only through the wing.

NEXT MONTH: DRAWING HANDS | DEPICT SKIN BURNS | PAINT A ROTTING ANIMAL CADAVER DESIGN FLYING BEASTS | CONCEPT A STONE FIGURE | CREATE A MAGNIFYING EFFECT AND MORE!

STUDIO PROFILE

MOONBOT

An Oscar heralded the studio's arrival on the animation scene in 2012, but there's more to Moonbot than movies...

Some businesses thrive on structure, others thrive on joy. It's all about balance, according to Moonbot Studio's co-founder and creative partner, Brandon Oldenburg. "When you have the right balance, respect for both sides of the skill sets business and art, you're able to do great things."

Great things are what defines Moonbot, which has just added two Emmys to its growing list of awards. Yet, with the studio's lobby resembling a paediatrician's waiting room, and monthly drink and draw gatherings at the local microbrewery, you can't question that the balance is working. With an approximate ratio of 20 per cent admin and the rest "incredibly talented, gifted, disciplined and (tongue in cheek) mature artists", there's an obvious emphasis on childlike joy. As Brandon explains: "We look through the eyes of our younger selves, to keep ➡➡

Christina Ellis sketches with Beavan Blocker. "I get really fired up about the culture of the art team, and want to foster relationships between artists," she says.



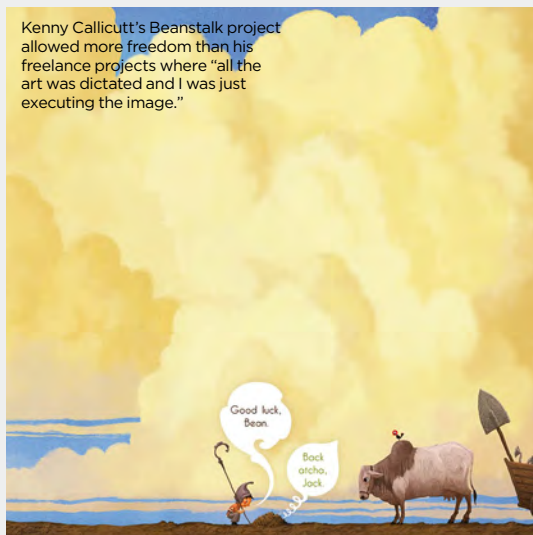
LOCATION: Louisiana, US**PROJECTS:** A Bean, A Stalk
and a Boy Named Jack**OTHER PROJECTS:**

The Mischievians, Morris

Lessmore, Diggs Nightcrawler

WEB: <http://ifxm.ag/m-bot>

Kenny Callicutt's Beanstalk project allowed more freedom than his freelance projects where "all the art was dictated and I was just executing the image."



And then things began... to...



our adult selves in check. We just want to tell stories everybody likes, from six- to 96-year-olds, but we have to enjoy it first."

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL



Balance isn't just about creative and business ratios, it's about reading the room and keeping that joy alive. "At any given moment," says

Brandon, "you could accidentally blow out the creative spark. You have to keep that spark fuelled."

Understanding how a creative mind works is a key part of Moonbot's success, giving ideas time to breathe and embracing the meandering steps towards perfection. Brandon likens it to teaching his daughter how to ride a bike, telling her "the important thing to understand is we're going to fall down at least 45 times. Just embrace that and say 'Yes, I fell down once! Now I'm going to fall down 44 times!' But know that every time you fall you are going to get closer to this thing called riding a bike."



Brandon Oldenburg and Joe Bluhm sought to create a conflicted character in Chipotle's The Scarecrow through story, body language, lighting and colour.

It takes an equally balanced individual to fit into a team that creates such playful perfections. "An incredible portfolio is one box to check," says Brandon, "but they need to have a love for storytelling, cinema, games and books. They also have to have good people skills. And it's important they're doing what they love; that means we will get incredible work and they will be happy. They need to be satisfied – we don't want anyone to feel like this is a job."

While a well-developed skill set is important, Moonbot also looks for artists

who want to embrace a variety of things. Many studios try to compartmentalise, finding the one step where an artist excels and avoiding the risk of letting them step outside that expertise. "What's unique about this place are the different disciplines," says art lead Joe Bluhm. "But

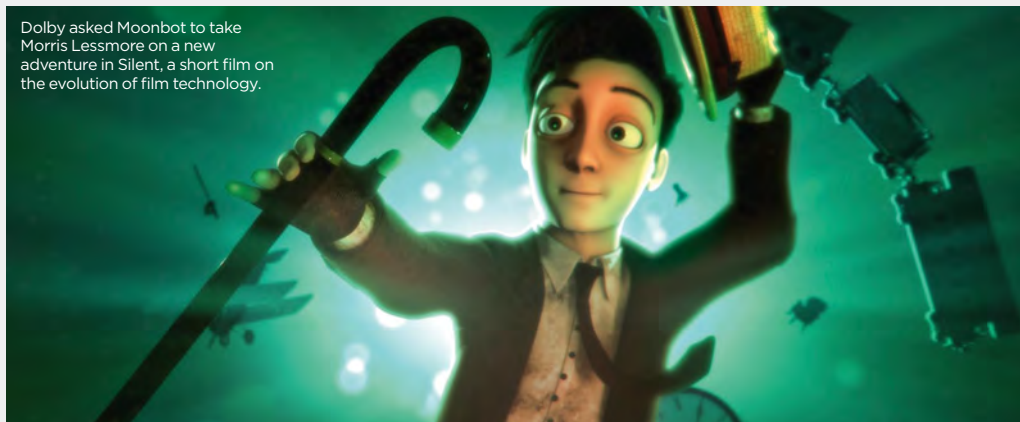


we all care about the same things: the quality of art, storytelling and the game or film we're putting out there.

Everyone wants to support that. I like the idea that you can speak up and someone will listen rather than saying it's not your turn to talk."

“They need to be satisfied – we don't want anyone to feel like this is a job”

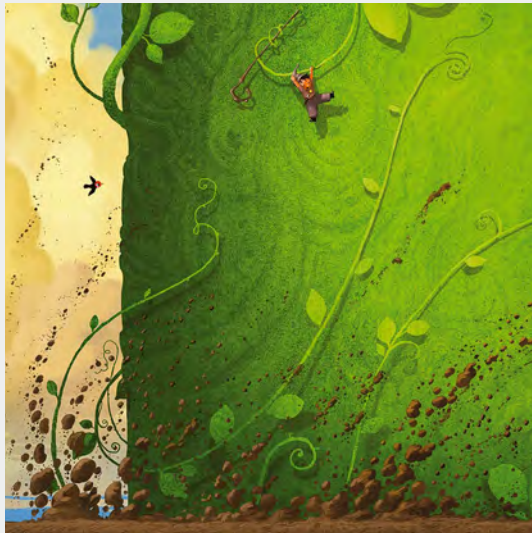
Dolby asked Moonbot to take Morris Lessmore on a new adventure in Silent, a short film on the evolution of film technology.



NO BEANS ABOUT IT



Kenny Callicutt was a freelance illustrator before coming to Moonbot. "I was more traditional; never freelanced for any studio, it was all magazines, book covers and kids books." He never got to see what the final product looked like. "I was largely ignorant of what working at a studio entailed. Before, I'd get a call from somebody I'd never met, they'd send over a written pitch, I would do some thumbnails and make a picture. ➡



JOE BLUHM

Joe tells us what he brings to the Moonbot table

Had you published anything before coming to Moonbot?

I produced caricatures for years. When you see how people react to being drawn, with their insecurities coming to the fore, you find it's such a strange anthropology. I decided to publish a caricature art book called *Rejects* where I show the drawings people didn't like because they were done too well.

What was your first experience at Moonbot?

I came to the company to do storyboarding, but I instantly started asking if I could become involved with the character design and concept art. I was responsible for the majority of the design and storyboards for *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore*.

What do you focus on as department lead?

I make sure all the artists are enjoying what they're doing, that communication is happening between members of the art team, and try to set a standard for the quality of art we do.

What are your personal tasks at Moonbot?

It can be storyboarding, creating animatics for the beginning of a project, helping to conceive the story and aesthetic. Sometimes, it's doing concept art, such as a styleframe at the beginning of a project to define the look of a film or commercial, and my favourite thing is to do character design.

What have been some of your favourite projects?

We recently did a project for Amplify Learning, putting together a tablet and digital curriculum to teach Edgar Allan Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado*. I was a huge Poe fan when I was younger so I was really excited to do this. I got to interpret the text visually, design the characters and storyboard and create something totally new. I was lucky enough to lead story, art direct, and direct the film with Bill Joyce.

What was your favourite task on Chipotle's *The Scarecrow*?

I really enjoy colour and establishing palettes. The model and animation team sends you a screengrab: it looks like a weird, half-finished grey sculpture shot, and I get to paint on top of that, supporting the lighting artists as much as I can. Those are fun because all you are thinking about is light and colour and how it plays in the scene.



Joe graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Art and built up a career in caricature art, which he also taught, before joining Moonbot.

www.joebluhm.blogspot.co.uk

Photo by Louisiana Economic Development



Moonbot Studios artists and animators work in the "artist pit," which was designed to foster collaboration.



As the main illustrator on *The Numberlys*, Christina Ellis worked closely with Kenny Callicutt, collaborating on ideas to create the best results.



CONDUCTING A CHARACTER

CG generalist Kendra Phillips on why sound was key in the making of a short animation



Kendra worked on the short film *Silent*, for Dolby Laboratories. "I was involved in every step of the project, from the client meetings and initial pitching phase at the very beginning, to and character designs, storyboarding, designing the main character and eventually modelling and rigging her to an extent.



Orchestral setting

"The original pitch was an older male composer with wild hair, conducting an off-screen orchestra to show off the sound system. After iterating on that idea for a while, everyone felt we should try different approaches."

Hair today...

"We loved that the composer's hair could be so expressive – almost becoming a character in itself – so we tried other options."



"There's always a moment you see in your mind that becomes the heart of a project." Brandon Oldenburg, on his inspiration for *The Scarecrow*.

➤ Here, it's everything from asset design to matte paintings." Now, at Moonbot, he's already collaborated on a video game, several short films including Chipotle's *The Scarecrow*, and books such as *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* and the upcoming *A Bean, A Stalk and A Boy Named Jack*, written by William Joyce, Moonbot's other creative partner.

Working with William [Bill] is far more organic. On *Beanstalk*, Kenny says that, "The script existed but it wasn't set in stone and the arrangement of the book was still up in the air. There were even instances where Bill hadn't decided what was going to be written on the page, but had given us a pitch of what was going to happen in the

Joe Bluhm designed colour keys for *The Scarecrow*, which is one of his favourite tasks at Moonbot.

story. We just started doing sketches, Bill liked a few and wrote to match. That was awesome. That doesn't usually happen."

Christina Ellis was hired by Moonbot after her 2010 graduation from Ringling College of Art and Design. "I was lucky because my portfolio wasn't that impressive, but it was interesting enough to get an interview. They opened my sketchbook and saw how



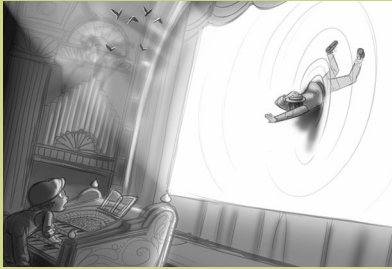
"I almost always get to do preliminary palettes and general lighting"

many ideas I had, and how my mind runs at a mile a minute."

At Moonbot, Christina "floats like a firefighter on different projects, but I almost always get to do preliminary palettes and general lighting." She left her mark on nearly every phase of William Joyce's book, *The Numberlys*.

"Bill will get ideas, put a drawing on your desk and say, 'play with this'. Sometimes I get to play for a day, sometimes longer. It's the process of nurturing." Because he knows his artists well, their skill sets and styles, Bill is usually pleased with the results.

"For two weeks I did visual exploration. We started a dialogue on how many pages the book had, what compositions would be



Child's play

"Myself and the directors pushed the clients towards the idea of a bright girl. This introduced a unique angle to the character's relationship."



Expressive face

"After the character designs were finalised by the visual development team, I got to model her and create her facial rig."



Fingers in pies

"By the end of the project, I had been involved every single part of the project except for animation, which is not something that I'd done since school."



where and what the story would be like. He'd give me more specific drawings and the book kept getting polished."

MIXING THINGS UP A LITTLE

Collaboration and fostering relationships is one of Christina's passions, and she's happy when the mantle of lead is passed to a co-worker. "With Numberlys, I got to be the main illustrator, but Kenny helped me with the illustrations when he had free time. When Beanstalk came around it was his turn

Kendra Phillips prepares for the director's afternoon rounds, refining 3D models for the short film, *Silent*.

to do the art and I was able to help him with compositions or character designs when he needed it. I like relationships that change with the time and needs of the project."

Now Moonbot may be turning the page to its next adventure. The studio's acquired the rights to two books: *The Extincts* and *Olivia Kidney*. Joe is tackling the character designs and concept art for what Moonbot hopes will be its first feature film. "I'm restless if I don't get my hands in everything," he says. ●



While developing *The Numberlys*, Christina Ellis and Bill Joyce brainstormed all elements of the book.

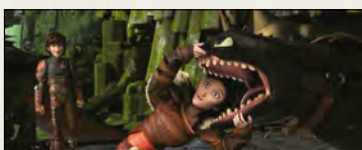
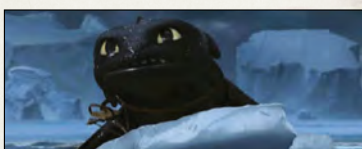
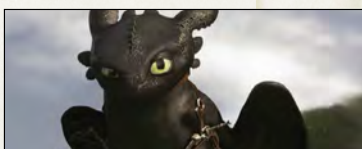
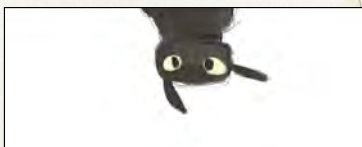
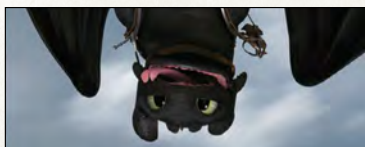
Sketchbook

How to Train Your Dragon 2

Artists who worked on the dragons 'n' vikings tale reveal some of the sketches that led to the smash-hit sequel

TOOTHLESS

Concept artists Tron Mai, Ryan Savas, Paul Fisher and Johane Matte tackle Toothless. Character designer Nico Marlet: "We added a few refinements to make him look a little older."



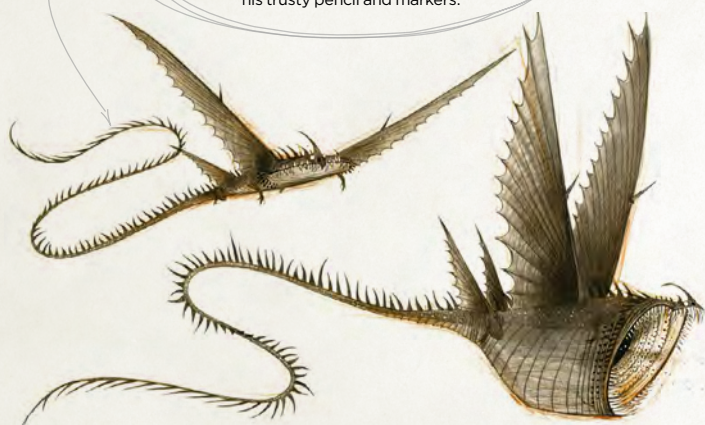
DRAGO

Nico Marlet came up with the first idea for this character. After a couple more passes by other artists, Nico then finalised it with a dragon skin cape.



THUNDERDRUMS

Nico Marlet came up with the design and look of these thunderously scary dragons with his trusty pencil and markers.



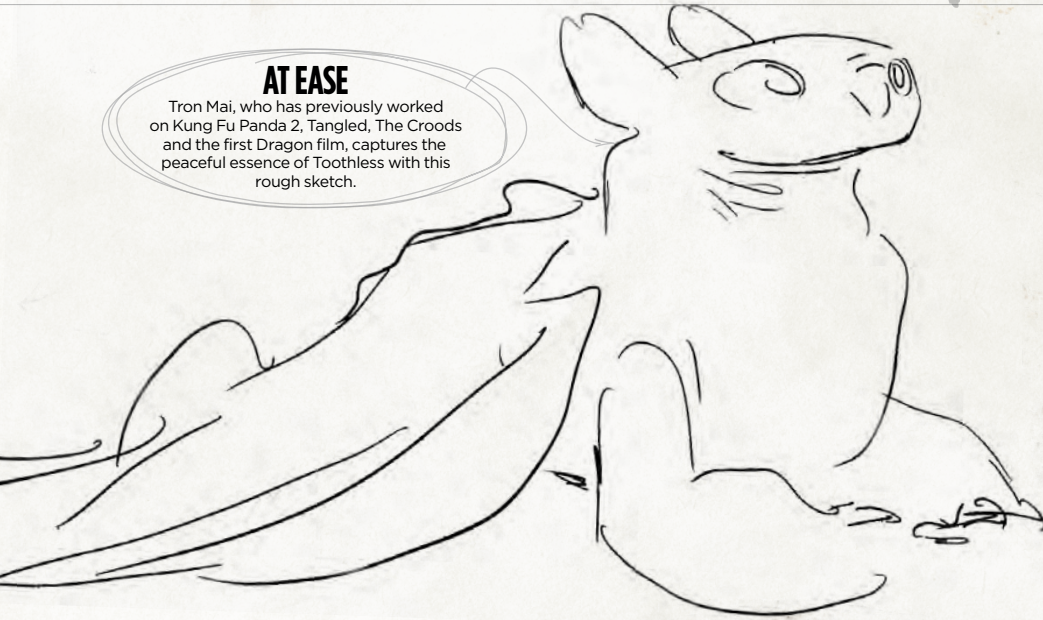
Studio PROFILE

DreamWorks Animation
COUNTRY: US

DreamWorks Animation has produced animated feature films since 1998's *Antz*, which featured the voice of Woody Allen. *How to Train Your Dragon 2* is its 29th film, and the accompanying *Art Of HTTYD2* book (including over 300 concepts, preliminary drawings, architectural plans and digital artworks) is published by Titan Books. For more information on the art book visit <http://ifxm.ag/ifxHTTYD2>.

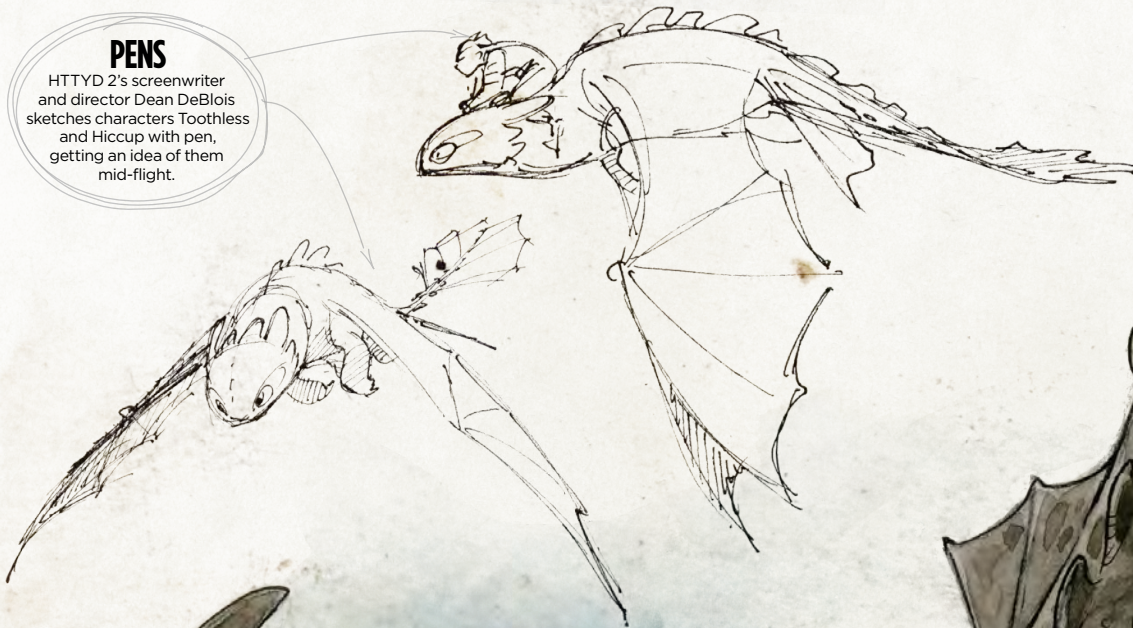
AT EASE

Tron Mai, who has previously worked on *Kung Fu Panda 2*, *Tangled*, *The Croods* and the first *Dragon* film, captures the peaceful essence of Toothless with this rough sketch.



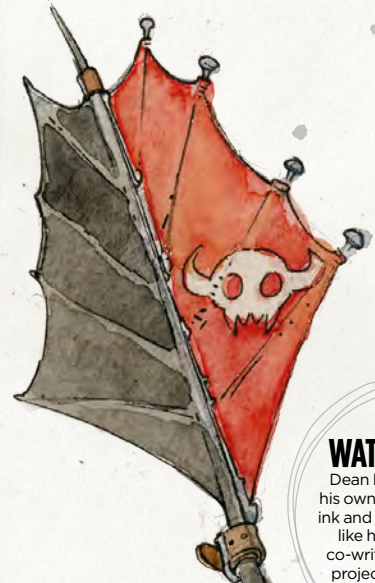
PENS

HTTYD 2's screenwriter and director Dean DeBlois sketches characters Toothless and Hiccup with pen, getting an idea of them mid-flight.



WATERCOLOURS

Dean DeBlois works up his own pen sketches with ink and watercolour, much like he did for his first co-writing and directing project: Disney's *Lilo & Stitch*, which was released in 2002.



"We added a few refinements to make Toothless look a little older"

Sketchbook



"There's always more freedom when you're designing a villain..."

MORE PENS

Director Dean explores the heroes of the film, Toothless and Hiccup, from another angle in pens. Dean and co have already started work on the third instalment of the dragon franchise, set for a 2016 release.



HEADS UP

These studies by Jean-Francois Rey show some versions of Cloudjumper. In the film he flies with Toothless, so the artist wanted a bold look to help differentiate the two, even at a distance.



DRAGOS

Head of character animation, Simon Otto: "There's always more freedom when you're designing a villain. For Drago we explored many different hair and beard styles. We needed a design that felt like it was not from the Viking world, but we didn't want to be too specific about where he was from."



CLOUDJUMPER

Director and artist Dean DeBlois: "I liked the idea of two sets of wings that form an X in the sky. They could be stowed into one another so as to create a surprise reveal."

Want to share your sketches? Email us with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com
NEXT MONTH'S SKETCHBOOK: MILES JOHNSTON

An exploration of design space, landscape and architecture
and how to best convey the mood, story and history of each location



ENVIRONMENT

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**Workshops assets
are available...**

Download each workshop's WIPs, final image and brushes by turning to page 6. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.



Advice from the world's best artists

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Nathan Fowkes helps you to bring your environment designs to life with clever lighting designs.

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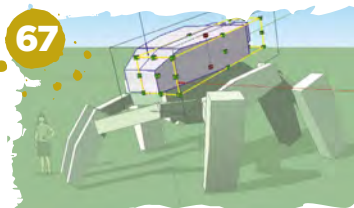
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Photoshop HOW TO RENDER CHARACTERS

Discover how you can make your 2D character designs look like 3D models. **Pramin Phatiphong** is your guide

Artist PROFILE

Pramin Phatiphong
COUNTRY: US



Pramin is an Los Angeles based art director and concept artist

working in animation, advertising, print and mobile. He's an all-round ethical chap with good table manners.

<http://ifxm.ag/praminp>

**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

Fixing colours, size, character poses, format and rendering styles will be some or all of the things that you'll be asked to do during the visual development process. This can be time consuming and creatively draining, even for the best of us.

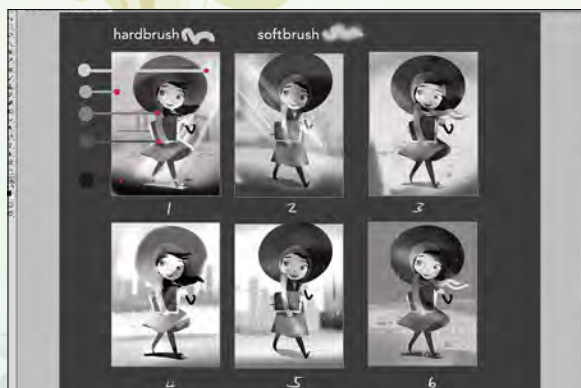
So in this workshop, I'll introduce an approach to rendering that I've used over the years to help me through many demanding production requirements. Essentially, my process covers the

rendering of a 3D look in 2D. This is a time-saving method that helps the development team to clarify and define concepts before the character or asset is submitted to modelling, which is a lengthier and more costly process, and more difficult to correct at a later date.

The approach adopts a relatively non-destructive method of rendering, which makes use of many layers along with the Pen tool. It requires some time to set up properly and this might seem counter-

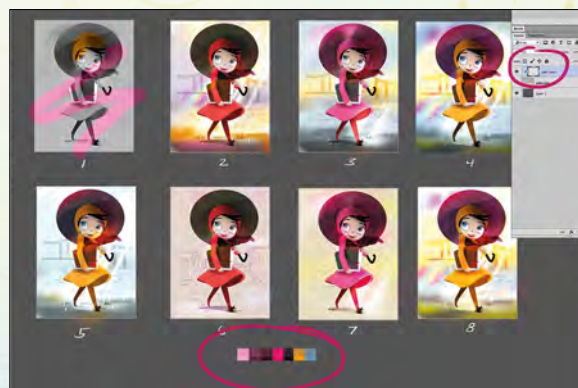
intuitive, but spending the extra time in establishing your graphics up front will give you the flexibility to deal with most production demands that raise their heads during the latter part of the process.

Staying organised, naming layers and creating context folders will give you back more time for higher levels of creative thinking and execution. Finally, knowing the basics of 3D lighting or just plain cinematic lighting will always come in handy, whatever the assignment.



1 Conceptualising the composition

The brief calls for a young, hip urban girl with artistic dreams, so I draft up black and white thumbnails to work out composition ideas as well as story and mood. I create between six and 10 thumbnails, using no more than three to five basic value planes with a simple Hard brush, and a Soft brush to create various lighting schemes.



2 Colour test

I take a single thumbnail and make eight copies of them on a single layer. To colour it, I create a separate layer using the Overlay layer effect. I use as many layer effects (Color, Multiply and Screen) as necessary to achieve the right effect. It's always better to paint in the effects, but having a command of layer effects will help you stay flexible for production demands.

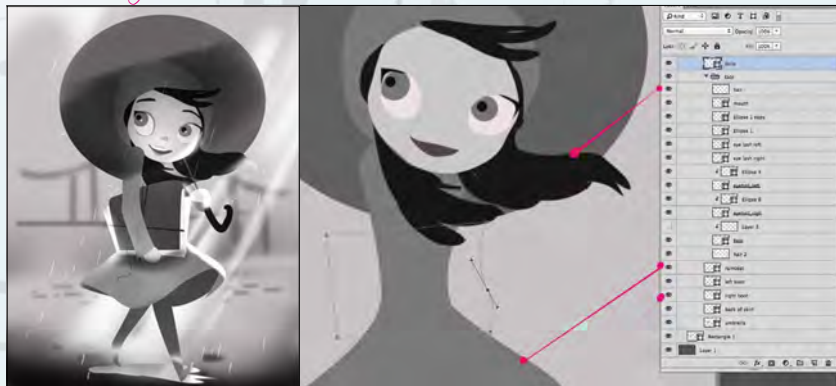
Shortcuts Resizing Brush

Opt+Ctrl (PC)
Opt+Cmd (Mac)

Hold these keys down while dragging your stylus left or right.



Thumbnail image



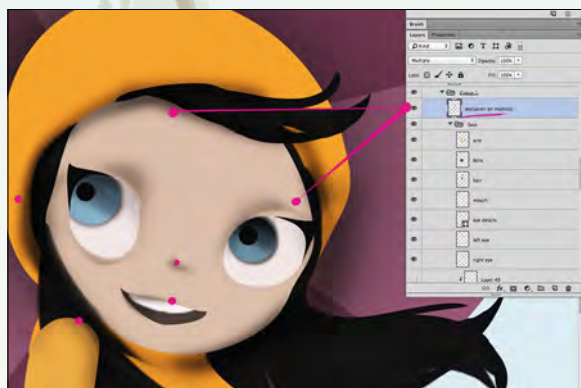
PRO SECRETS

Get to grips with the Pen

This Photoshop tool might be one that most concept artists avoid, because the drawing feedback doesn't feel as spontaneous, and it's also fairly cumbersome to use. But with a day's dedicated practice, a working knowledge of the Pen tool can add greater precision and the speed you need to your creative arsenal.

3 Blocking out shapes

Once I'm satisfied with the colour scheme, I take the small black and white thumbnail and enlarge it with the Transform tool to the desired size. Just like using tracing paper, I use the Pen tool to create shapes for each character part – face, eyeball, hair, legs, mouth and so on – over the enlarged thumbnail. As I do this, I make sure the values match the original.



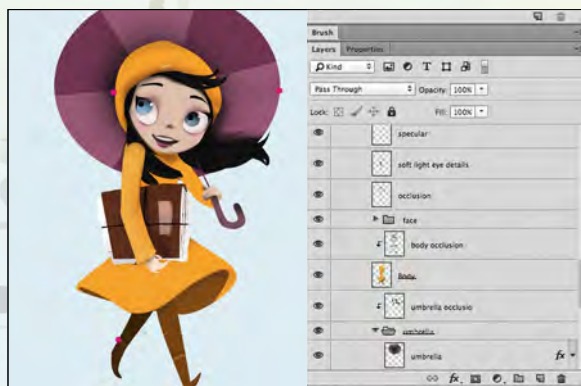
4 Colour fill

Next, I colour each part by sampling the colour test thumbnail. Double-clicking the shape layer brings up a Color Picker window, and I use the Eye Dropper tool to find the target colour. I pick a half-tone from each plane. Whether creating shapes or colour, I prefer to use a non-destructive method when possible. This gives me options during my painting phase.



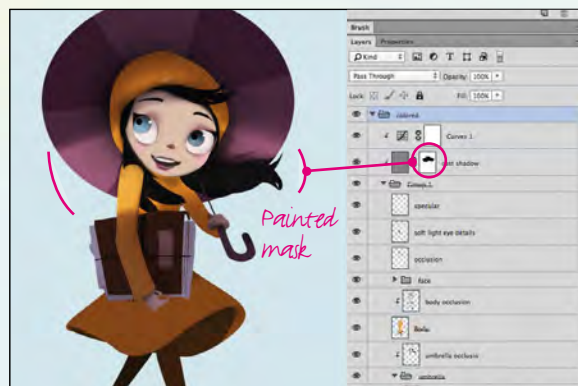
5 Ambient occlusion

This is generally a 3D term. Put simply, it's the innermost area of the painted object where it's darkened by shadow. I use a Clipping layer with a Multiply setting to start painting in shadows (not cast shadows) in areas where there's a recess: for example, the fold of the eye, the mouth or the clothing. I use black and set the layer's Opacity to between 60 and 70 per cent.



6 On to the face

After applying ambient occlusion, I create a Soft Light effect layer and apply several colour accents to bring out the iris, cheeks and lips. Soft Light is one way to make the image pop with subtlety, but enough to create a strong focal interest. Of course, applying specular shine to eyes at either the 10 or two o'clock position of the iris is a safe bet.

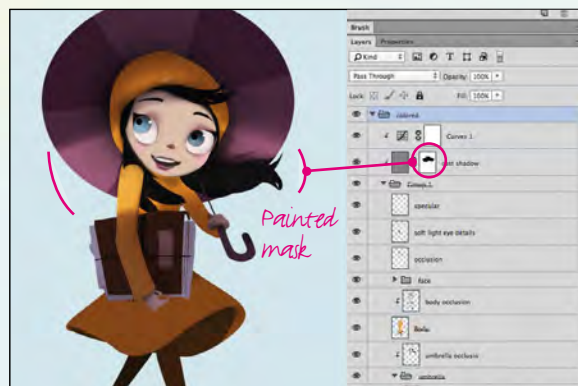


7 The big picture

At this point, I back up and assess the overall picture. Then I apply Soft Light or Overlay layer effects to the entire body to balance the composition, making sure that the colour accents serve the focal point. I made the rear leg darker, as well as bringing up the occlusion behind the head to create more depth. I also create some graphic and textural elements to the umbrella.

8 Adding a cast shadow

Now that all the pieces are prepped, I introduce a dramatic cast shadow on a Clipping layer. Using a purple colour fill, I set the layer to Multiply. I then create a mask to erase off the part that represents light dawning on the character's face. A Soft Round brush gives me the flexibility in handling the cast shadow edges, because they vary in softness.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: SOFT ROUND

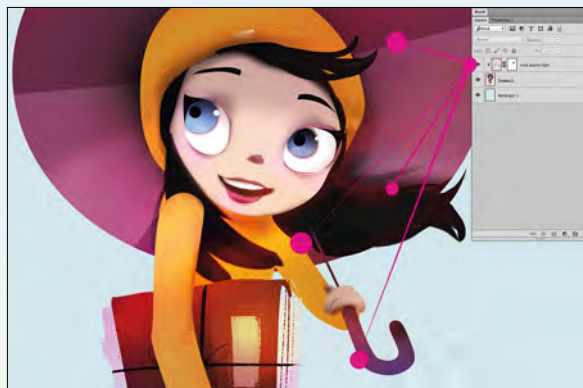
This brush is great for painting planes that require gradients, and for blending edges or colour transitions.

MED ROUND

Ideal for laying down colours and broad strokes. It's usually the first brush I use for the bulk of illustrations.

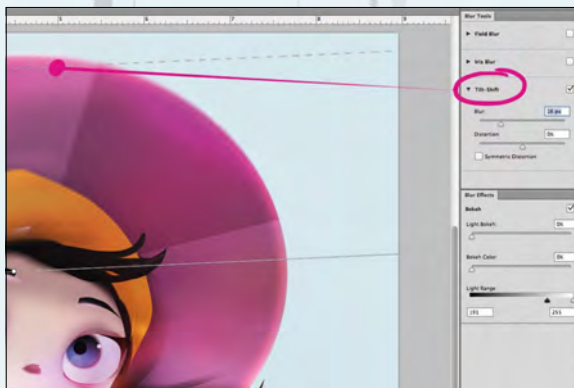
HARD ROUND

This brush gets the least amount of use, but it's extremely helpful when I need to create a vector-like stroke quickly.



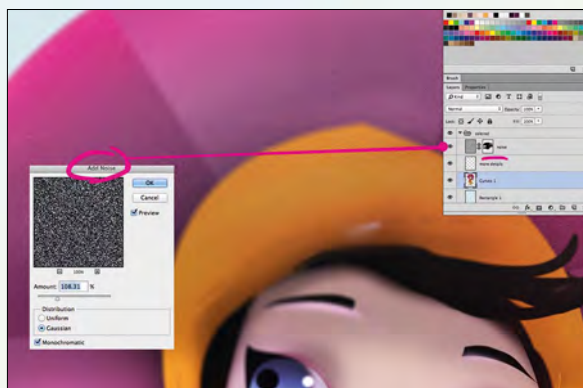
9 Lighting accents

After some degree of adjustment, I merge all the layers and save it as another file to declutter my workspace. I create another Clipping layer and set it to Vivid, sampling the base colour to paint lights in. Vivid mode works rather well for a high-key composition such as this one.



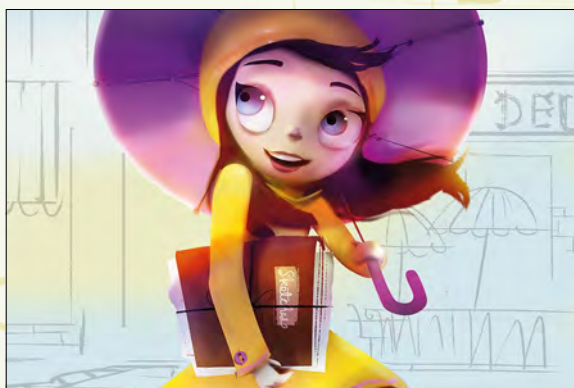
10 Adding blur

Next, I use a tilt-shift effect to create shallow focal length to add intimacy to the character. In essence, the blurred edges force the viewer to look at the in-focus area. The degree, position and size of blurring is a matter of preference. Whether hard painted or by effects, blurring helps to add a little mystery to the piece.



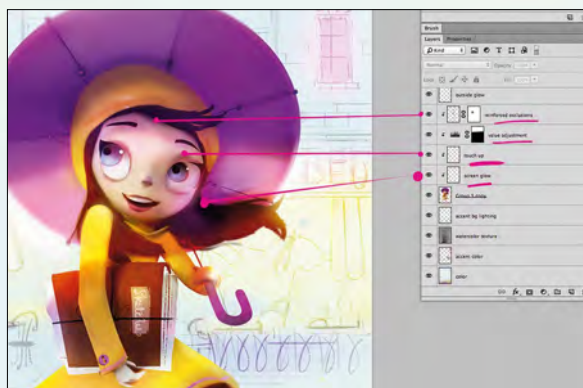
11 Apply some noise

Next I use the Add Noise effect to mimic film grain, as well as distress the image further. This is done by applying a colour fill on another layer, usually black. I render Add Noise to this black-filled layer and set it to Overlay. I adjust the Opacity to create a subtle effect, and mask off unwanted areas with a Soft brush until the desired effect is achieved.



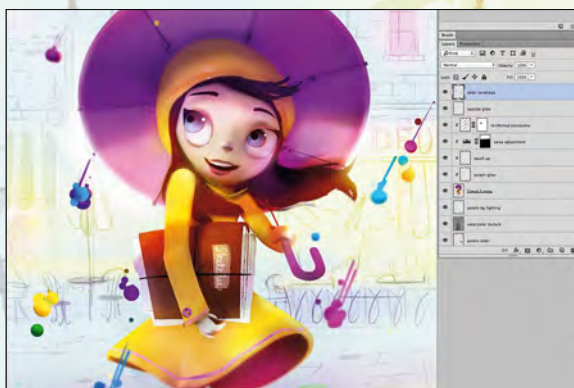
12 Background elements

The brief requires the background to be simple, sketchy and sparse, so that text can be added when the image goes on the cover. On a separate layer, set to Multiply, I apply a light-blue fill, then scrawl a few architectural details that suggest a Parisian setting. I also paint some lighting overlays to the background to further frame the character.



13 Adjust values

All the heavy lifting has been achieved by playing with shadow and colour. I use Adjustment layers to tweak the levels and saturation for optimal readability, and create more details to fill in the compositional gaps, such as reinforced occlusions, paint splashes and colour droplets. I warm the image by adding a watercolour texture to the background.



14 Conclusion

A lot of the initial work was done to anticipate iterations of the image. Creating all the assets using a non-destructive process means that re-adjusting lighting, saturation and even pose or expression is straightforward. This technique adds speed and control to my workflow. You can, of course, use Illustrator to substitute the process, but that's another workshop...

PRO SECRETS

Purge the clichés

Be bold and crank out as many thumbnails as the schedule allows. Don't pause to criticise. No one has to see your less-favourable creations. This is an exercise to purge any clichés that are inside you. Your creative muscle has a warm-up point and needs to be stretched to improve, if you're to see decent results.



Photoshop DESIGN A SET FOR ANIMATION

Mingjue Helen Chen applies her knowledge of art direction to design and stage a distinctive animation environment

Artist PROFILE

Mingjue Helen Chen

COUNTRY: US



Helen works as a visual development artist and art director

In the feature animated film industry. Films that she's been involved with include Frankenweenie and Big Hero 6.

<http://ifxm.ag/mh-chen>



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

Welcome! This workshop won't only outline the basic way to start a set design, but also introduce the thinking behind set design for animation.

One of the most important aspects of any set in animation is the fact that it should work as a stage for the characters and story, as well as any action that takes place within it. When you look back at some of the classic feature film animations, you'll notice that each frame is designed so that it contains the best composition to tell the story. Your set design should be no different: it should first and foremost be designed for the camera and story.

I find the easiest way to begin is to imagine a scene or actual shot from the final film with a strong story point, and

stage it in the clearest way possible.

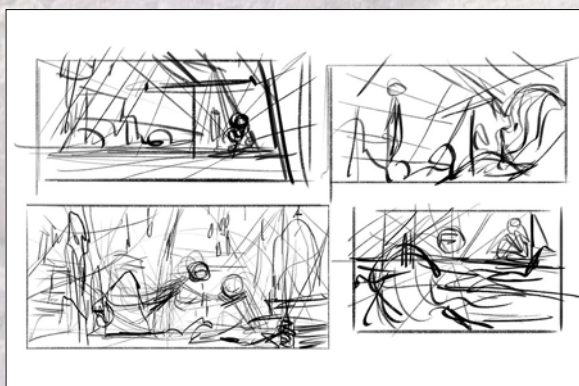
Afterwards, you can reverse engineer the actual design of the set and props.

As a visual development artist, a large part of the job is being able to visualise what the film could look like aesthetically, using techniques such as lighting, texture and stylisation to get that vision across. Another big consideration that relates specifically to film versus traditional illustration is the time the audience has to digest information. In an illustration, the purpose is to capture the viewer's attention for as long as possible; to elicit their appreciation of small details and paint strokes. However, in film the viewer only has a limited amount of time to digest the visual information put forth by the camera in a shot. Essentially, every second counts!

PRO SECRETS

Painting your lighting effects

When lighting an object, I prefer to paint the light into it and then add layer effects such as Color Dodge afterwards to enhance the effect. My basic approach is to start on the object with basic lighting built in, use an Overlay/Dodge layer with the colour of the light I want to use, and then create a new layer for effects such as bloom.



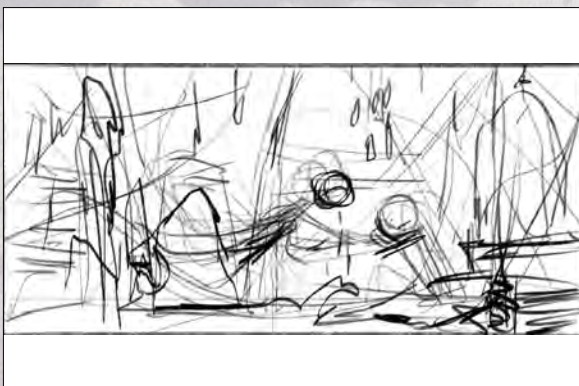
1 Produce some thumbnails

Before beginning, I decide on a simple story – one that's easy to read and a fun jumping-off point. A lonely girl spends her time in the attic of an orphanage or a foster home, and it's here she meets another inhabitant of the attic. This simple story provides just enough context to get going on a set. I usually produce four or five thumbnails to get things going.



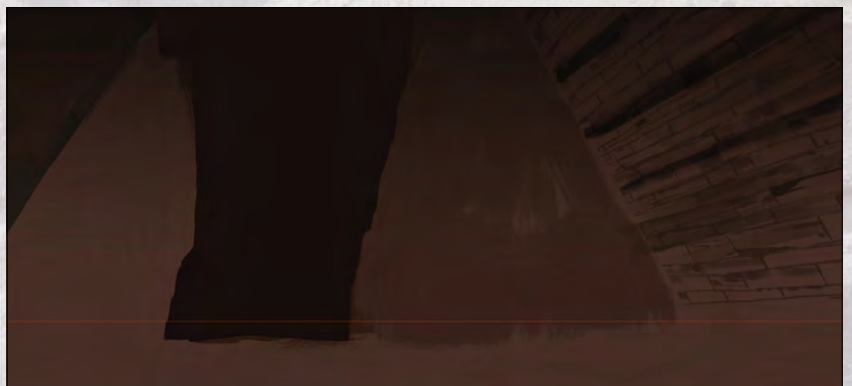
2 Research

Next, I spend some time seeking out references for different aspects of the painting; these can be photographs of the actual space, props or even lighting. By the time I start looking for reference I've already made some key decisions about the piece, such as the fact that I want the main light source to be warm candle light.



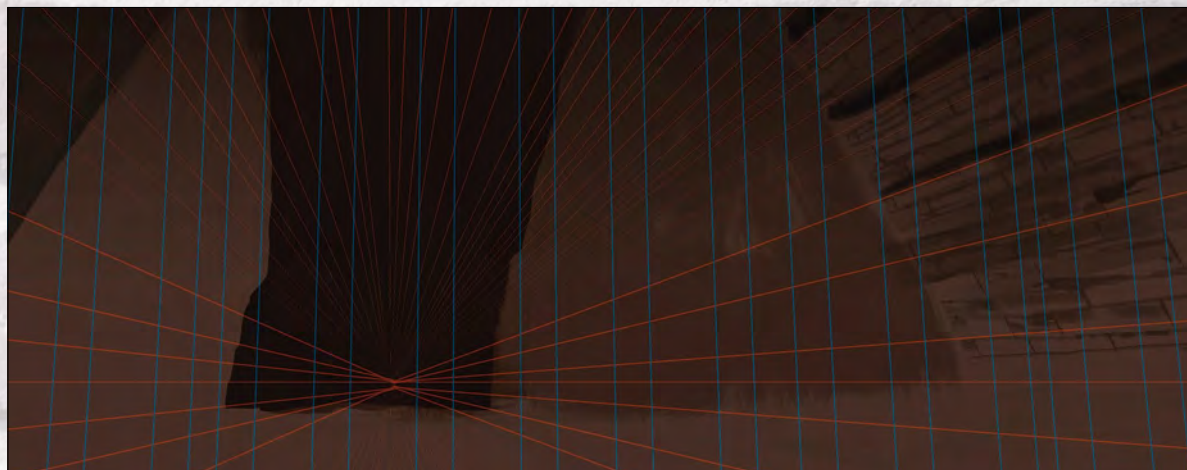
3 Deciding on a thumbnail

I chose a thumbnail in which the characters stand out from the supporting background. I also decide on the setting of an attic because it has a lot more visual interest than in a bedroom, because of the shapes created by the dormer windows.



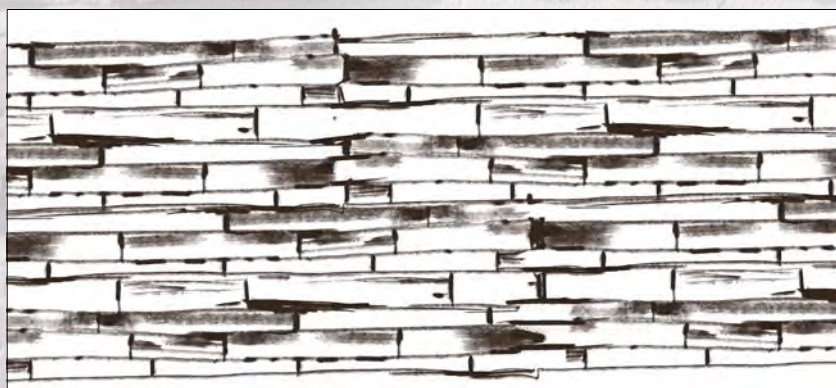
4 Laying in the space

This is the most important step for me, because this is where I lay in the key planes of the set, as well as the initial lighting. It determines not only the size of the space, but how dark or light the final piece will be. Every stroke I make afterwards will be judged against the value and colour of this first layer of paint. ➔



5 Set up your perspective grids

I don't often rely on perspective grids: if I follow them too closely I find the end result looks too stiff for animation. I do lay them in early, though, so I can look back and remind myself of what perspective I think the piece should be. The decision of what perspective to use has already been determined in my loose thumbnail.



RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: 006OILPASTEL

I use this flexible brush as a quick sketching brush, and for depicting nice, crisp edges.

THICK_ACRYLIC_ULTRA_TEXTURED

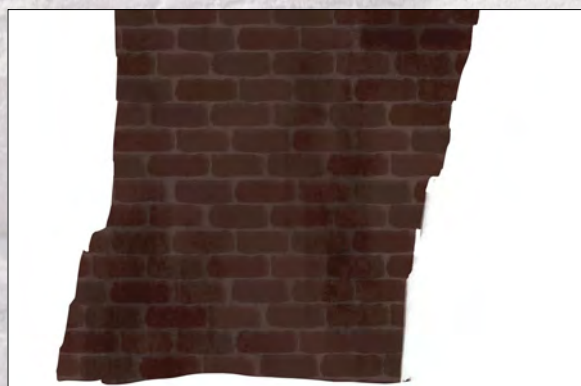
This is my main painting brush. I use it to produce a textured painterly base on every painting I do.

LIGHT_THICK_PAINT

I use this brush for its neat vertical and horizontal texture. It's ideal for creating a subtle wood grain texture.

6 Creating your own textures

I tend not to use photographs in my paintings, because they rarely look correct next to the more cartoony characters. So for repeating patterns and textures, I've started to find ways of creating my own. The danger in this though, is too much repetition, so I make sure things aren't too even: for example, the widths of the wood.



7 Laying in your textures

Next, I apply texture along those large planes of the set I established early on. I regularly pull up my perspective grid to make sure that it follows it more or less. I often use these textures in a layer mode such as Multiply and adjust the Opacity. It's important to paint over the laid-in texture, because otherwise it'll look like a flat texture that's been overlaid, funny enough!



8 Painting the chimney

I repeat the process of creating my own texture for the chimney. I move it on to a new layer so I can focus just on the chimney. Once I'm happy with the result, I move it back into my original file and adjust the lighting to match the rest of the image. Using a combination of Multiply and Darken layers gives me a pretty good result.

9 Adding architectural details

At this point I have my "stage" designated, so I start painting elements like the crossbeams with my lighting scheme in mind. The human brain tends to want to equalise things, but to give this attic the feel of a little wear and tear I change up the spacing between the beams. It also creates interest within the design, because not everything is perfectly spaced.



10 Time to redraw!

Now I take my image and recompose smaller details back on top of it, such as the characters and a few prop details. It's always hard to know how much detail you need to put into a painting, and for the first step of a set design like this painting, I think something that conveys the feeling of the space rather than every little detail is more important.

PRO SECRETS

Painting rim lights properly

One of the biggest mistakes I see when painting rim light is when it presents as a flat line along a shape. Think of rim lights as a light source that falls on top of the object and wraps around the form. Rim lighting will also be more believable if it looks like it's affected by texture and how the object reflects light. For example, use softer rim lights for objects such as wool or hair, and harder ones for metal.



11 Illustrating some props

Keeping with the main value structure of the piece, I paint details such as the foreground elements and the small trinkets that the character might have put up in her space – newspaper clippings, feathers, glass, for example. I want to show that she's taken this empty space and made it her own. If this set were to go to final, these props would warrant their own design pass.



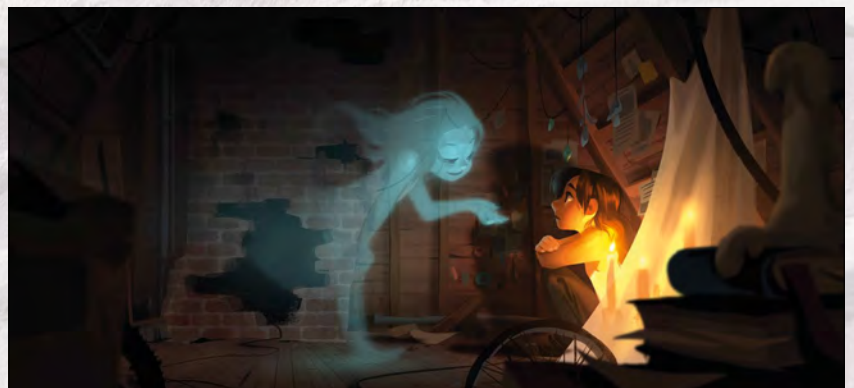
12 First character

Now I lay in the first character. She should be clearly visible among the darkness and all the little trinkets that she's put up, so I make sure she's one of the brightest points in the painting. I also create a cast shadow of the character to accentuate her lighter silhouette against the darkness that the shadow creates. This also helps to push the smaller details back.



13 Second character

This second character is tricky, because of the idea that she isn't just a human. I chose blue to offset the warm lighting on the human character, to pull them completely into different worlds and to keep the painting from feeling too monochromatic. I use a variety of blurs, Gaussian and motion to help give her a glow.



14 Lighting effects and finish

After the bulk of the painting has been completed, I can now focus on adjusting the lighting and values for the best read. The idea is to tweak the balance of the piece just in terms of value, to achieve the clearest read. I also add a rim light to the sitting character's face because I feel she's become slightly lost in the painting, even though I've put a dark shadow behind her. Finally, I add a noise filter to tie the painting together. ●

15 WAYS TO SURVIVE YOUR DREAM JOB IN ANIMATION

Chris Oatley's visual development experience will help you to ascend the animation industry's ranks

Artist PROFILE

Chris Oatley
COUNTRY: US



Chris left Disney in 2012 to start The Oatley Academy Of

Concept Art & Illustration. His ArtCast features education and career advice from some of the industry's top professional artists. www.chrisoatley.com

Spring 2007 was when I landed my first in-house visual development gig at Disney. After a few months of eye-opening experiences at the studio, I felt compelled to create the podcast that I wish had existed when I was trying to break into the industry.

Over the past seven years, eight animated films and a hundred podcast episodes, I've been helping artists make the transition from total noob to

experienced pro. In that time, I've observed a few common mistakes and misconceptions that could sabotage your animation career before it starts.

Even if you feel like a total noob (I often still do), no one has to know. You can – and should – begin preparing yourself to work in a studio environment long before you break in. Here are 15 ways to ensure that you look, sound and feel like a confident professional on your first day at an animation studio.



1 YOU'RE PROBABLY STOPPING TOO SOON

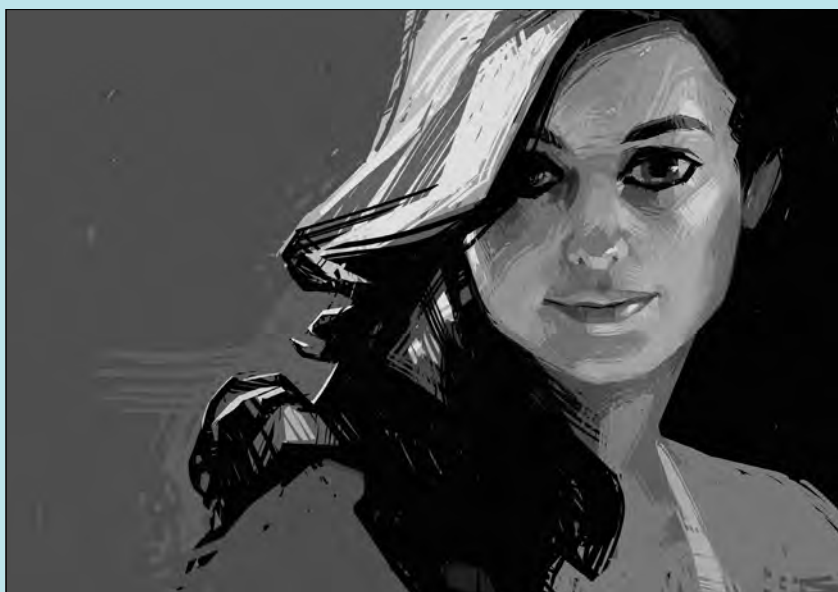
At Disney, I would spend three to five days on a single character design and then another week on the visual development painting. Sometimes during that process, we would decide to scrap everything and start over. It's rare for me to meet an aspiring artist who works this hard on a single character design or digital painting. I know that almost every artist on the internet is in a huge rush to churn out as many paintings as possible, but this isn't a race. Well, it is a race, but have you ever heard the story of the tortoise and the hare?

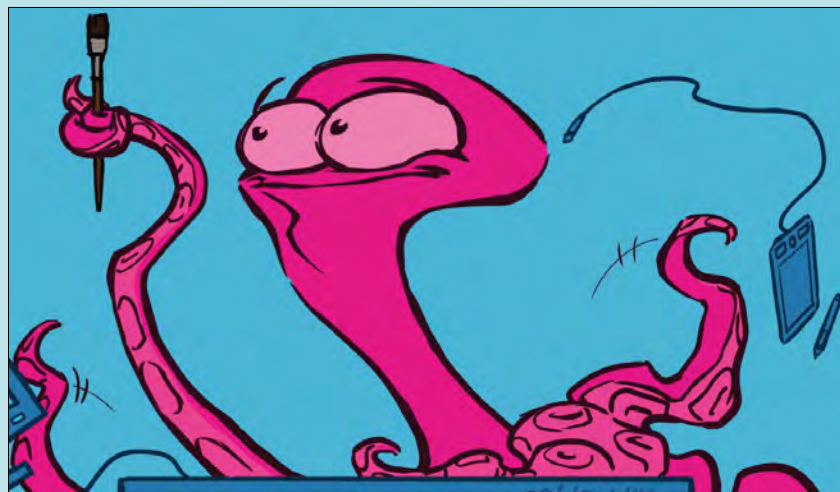


“ Try to understand how the synthesis of visual elements defined the art direction of successful animated films ”

2 BECOME A CHAMELEON

As an animation visual development artist, you'll have to adapt your work to the style of a particular film or TV show. You'll also face many design challenges that aren't covered in the style guide. Study the history of design and watch every director's commentary and 'making of' documentary you can find. Try to understand how the synthesis of visual elements defined the art direction of successful animated films such as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Mulan* and *The Incredibles*. Doing so will increase your artistic agility, and develop your versatility and your unique visual voice. ➔





3 DRAW AND PAINT THE REAL WORLD

You can't hide a weak drawing using shiny digital techniques. True professionals will see the stiffness in your figures and the mushy perspective in your environments. Regardless of your skill level, it's crucial to paint from real-world observation. You can always find figures and environments to study for free. Paint en plein air. Draw the animals at the zoo. Sign up to life-drawing sessions. Get your art buddies to pool funds and hire a model, or save your money and pose for each other.



4 IF IT LOOKS WRONG, THEN IT'S PROBABLY WRONG

Legendary painting guru Richard Schmid said: "Never knowingly leave anything wrong on your canvas." If something in your drawing or painting looks "wrong" then don't move on until you figure out what the problem is and fix it. Don't ignore the problems in your paintings. They won't go away with more rendering. They'll only get worse.



5 CREATE YOUR OWN 'TRADIGITAL' TECHNIQUES

Most of the artists at Disney work tradigitally, meaning they move back and forth between traditional and digital media. All of my character designs begin in my sketchbook and then I scan them into Photoshop or SketchUp or both to explore further. I then print the digital version and draw over it with pencil or marker or colour it with marker and coloured pencil. Then I scan the hybrid image and finish it digitally. Keep changing things up to keep it interesting.

“ Make the most of every opportunity to prove that you're an indispensable asset and a worthy addition to the A-Team ”



6 IT'S HARD OUT THERE FOR A TEMP

Breaking into animation is often like dating someone with a fear of commitment. Your first few gigs might feel uncomfortably impermanent, and that's likely because the studio is still unsure about the financial viability of investing in a long-term relationship with you. This happens to almost everyone. Don't let it mess with your head. Make the most of every opportunity to prove that you're an indispensable asset and a worthy addition to the A-Team. I found Linchpin by Seth Godin (www.sethgodin.com) a great read for learning how to become indispensable.



7 BE INVENTIVE... UP TO A POINT

Your work must be inventive and stylistically versatile. But you also don't want to stretch so far into versatility that you begin to showcase your weaknesses. Cory Loftis (pictured above) is a great example of an artist who maintains a balance between consistent quality and mind-blowing versatility, as his blog demonstrates: <http://coryloftis.tumblr.com>.



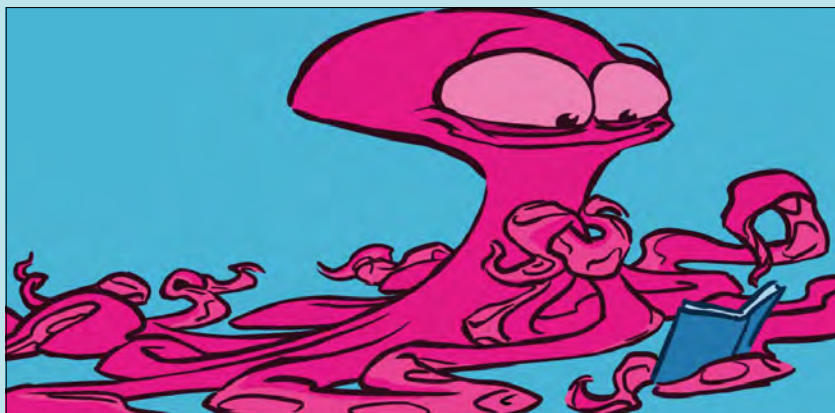
9 MEET THE PROFESSIONAL GEEK

The animation industry is full of geeks. Our cubicles are adorned with toys and most water cooler conversations sound like film school, but every successful animation pro has found their zen. They carry themselves with friendly confidence and engage in compelling, adult conversations. They aren't presumptuous and are good at reading social cues. Their colleagues feel both challenged and respected. Many aspiring artists haven't found the balance between geek and professional. Spend time with older, wiser professionals from any industry and practise the art of conversation.



8 UNDER-PROMISE, THEN OVER-DELIVER

When passionate artists get excited about a new, creative opportunity, they often promise too much, become overwhelmed and end up having to apologise for unmet expectations. As my friend Mike puts it, this is, "Writing cheques with your mouth that your body can't cash." I'm especially guilty of this. It's a hard habit to break. When freelancing for a studio (an opportunity that often precedes full-time work) or following-up with a recruiter or art director, always promise less than you know you can deliver by the deadline. When you deliver more than they expected, you'll seem like a superhero.



10 FEED YOUR HEAD

Creative ideas come from knowledge. Knowledge comes from history, past and present. A deep knowledge of art, film and literary history will fuel your imagination and help you communicate efficiently (and impressively) with your directors. If it'll make you smarter, read it.



11 HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

Some young artists break into Disney and start dilly-dallying. One of my younger colleagues dropped by my cube for up to an hour, multiple times a day. This artist didn't get the "not-removing-my-headphones" message, so we eventually had to have an awkward chat. Yes, you need to make connections with your colleagues, but every minute of the job is an audition for the next movie or TV show. Work hard, play hard.



12 PREPARE TO BE UNPREPARED

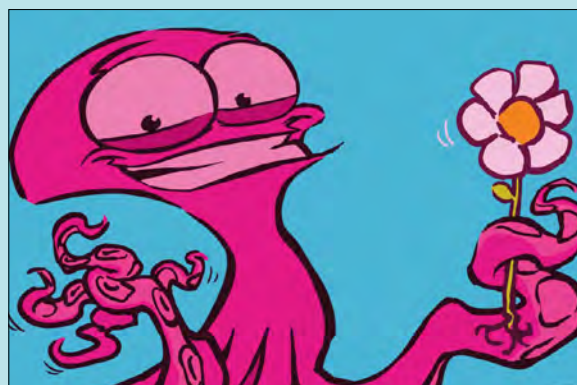
Everyone on the crew has too much to do. When something goes wrong, the producers look for the most convenient, viable answer... and that might be you. After you break in, it probably won't be long before you're asked to solve a high-stakes problem, or at least contribute to the solution. Stay cool. Trust your talent and training. And don't let them down.

“After you break in, it won't be long before you're asked to solve a high-stakes problem, or at least contribute to the solution”



13 NEGOTIATE A FAIR RATE

The Animation Guild (aka "Local 839") in Burbank publishes a yearly wage survey for the animation industry: <http://animationguild.org/contracts-wages>. Refer to it when you're submitting your salary requirements to an animation studio in southern California. Your starting rate is crucial because your future pay raises will probably build upon it. Note the entry-level rates as well as the ceiling to negotiate a fair rate without insulting your potential colleagues. While studios in other cities will probably pay a little less than studios in LA, you can still use the survey as a basis.



14 WITH GREAT POWER...

Artists and storytellers have an extraordinary ability to cultivate empathy in the world. Much of the pain we experience is caused (or severely intensified) by a lack of empathy across cultures, creeds, clubs and between individuals. Yes, I want you to pursue mastery of the craft and success in your creative career with wholehearted passion. I want you to get your dream job. I really do. But I want you to consider a higher calling, too. How can your art help to heal a relationship, humanise the oppressed or awaken selfless love in your audience? Why not try?

15 THE LONG HAUL

A successful career in animation goes way beyond your portfolio. Inside the studio, your primary job isn't to be the best artist on the crew. Your primary job is to make the lives of your art director, producers, director and crew as easy as possible. Of course, that means being a solid artist and taking art direction. But it also means being a humble listener, a trustworthy collaborator, a clever problem solver and a generous encourager. I hope you're up to the job! ●





Willow#2 by Cris DeLara
CGWorkshops Instructor



Online Learning 2014

VFX and Entertainment Design

CGWORKSHOPS

cgworkshops.org

SketchUp

HOW TO USE THE SCALE TOOL



The proper use of scale is just as important in a 3D environment as it is when working in 2D. **Mark Roosien** helps you on your way

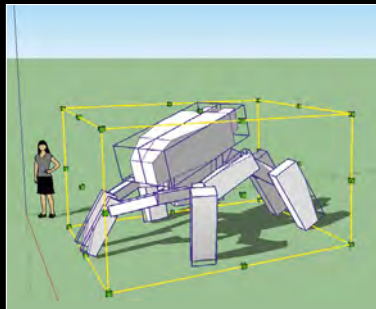
As you develop your models in SketchUp (you can download the free version of the program, SketchUp Make, at www.sketchup.com), you'll often find yourself rescaling individual features, or perhaps even an entire model. Particularly during the early stages of a 3D model, things can change rapidly and

frequently. It's just a natural part of the design process.

Fortunately, SketchUp enables you to resize individual lines, surfaces, components or entire models in just a few clicks. This is achieved by using the Scale tool. Here I'll use a (very rough) model of a robotic walker, to demonstrate the scaling process in three simple steps.

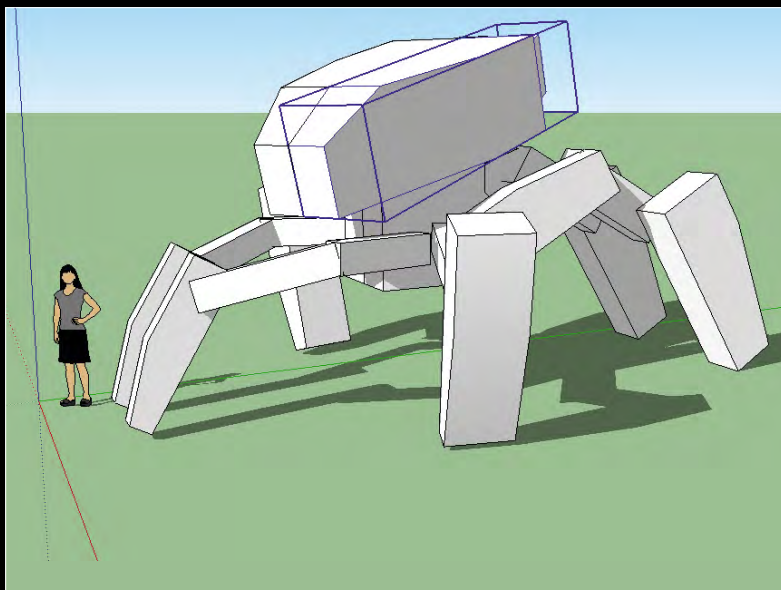
1 Always consider the human scale

Every time you open a new file in SketchUp, you're greeted by a 2D human figure. I always use this figure as a reference to set up the overall size of a model. In this case, the walker should be bigger. Select all walker components with the Select icon. Now select the Scale tool. A yellow box appears around the selected model.



2 Resize the model

Select one of the green cubes on the end-points of the yellow box to resize the model. Move your mouse to enlarge the model. The walker has a nicer overall size now, but the main body should be a bit flatter. Click one of the main body components, choose Edit Component, and then select all the lines and surfaces in it.



Artist PROFILE

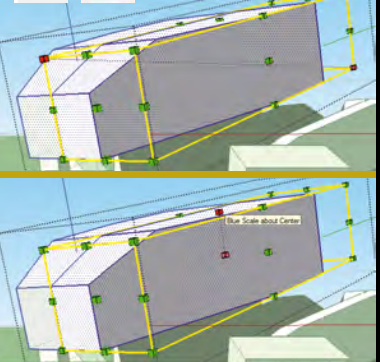
Mark Roosien
COUNTRY: Netherlands



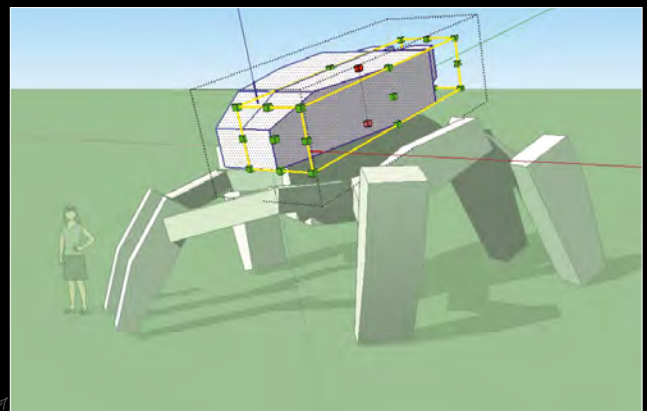
Mark is a self-taught artist who jumped from traditional

media to SketchUp seven years ago. He specialises in nuts 'n' bolts sci-fi art.
<http://ifxm.ag/mroosien>

PLAYING WITH GREEN CUBES



In this article, I use the Select tool (A) and Scale tool (B). When using the Scale tool, a yellow box with green handles appears. Click any of the handles to manipulate the yellow box (and thus its contents). When you move a cube, that cube and its counterpart will turn red. If you'd like to rescale a component from its centrepoint, hold Ctrl while moving a cube. You can also define an exact scaling factor by entering a value in the Scale box.



3 Manipulate individual features

Click the Scale tool again. The yellow box reappears, but only around the selected features in the component. This time, use the green box on top of the yellow box and move it downwards. The component (and its duplicate) is flattened. If you like, move your mouse in the opposite direction to stretch the component. It's that easy. ●



Photoshop

DYNAMIC LIGHTING IN PHOTOSHOP

Concept artist **Nathan Fowkes** shows you how to bring your concept art and environment designs to life through clever lighting design

Artist PROFILE

Nathan Fowkes
COUNTRY: US



Nathan is a concept artist with screen credits on 11 feature films.

He's worked for clients throughout the animation and gaming industries including DreamWorks, Disney, Blizzard Entertainment and Ubisoft.

<http://ifxm.ag/n-fowkes>



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

PRO SECRETS

Omit the solution

Sometimes the solution to lighting problems is not about what you put in, but what you choose to leave out. If your subject is meant to be illuminated, try contrasting it with shadowed areas devoid of information. And vice versa for the shadows: if your subject needs to be seen in the shadows, try burning the information out of the lights. You then have the value range to lighten the shadows for clear detail work. The active versus passive relationships will create a powerful statement in your work.

As concept artists, our job is to reach out to our audience and connect with them on a profound emotional level.

One of our primary tools to achieve this goal is lighting design. For this workshop I'll build a scene using light to create visual interest and emotion.

My process is to explore the idea through thumbnails, then bring them into Photoshop for colour development and finish. I'll rework the scene several

times using different lighting palettes to create a range of emotional beats.

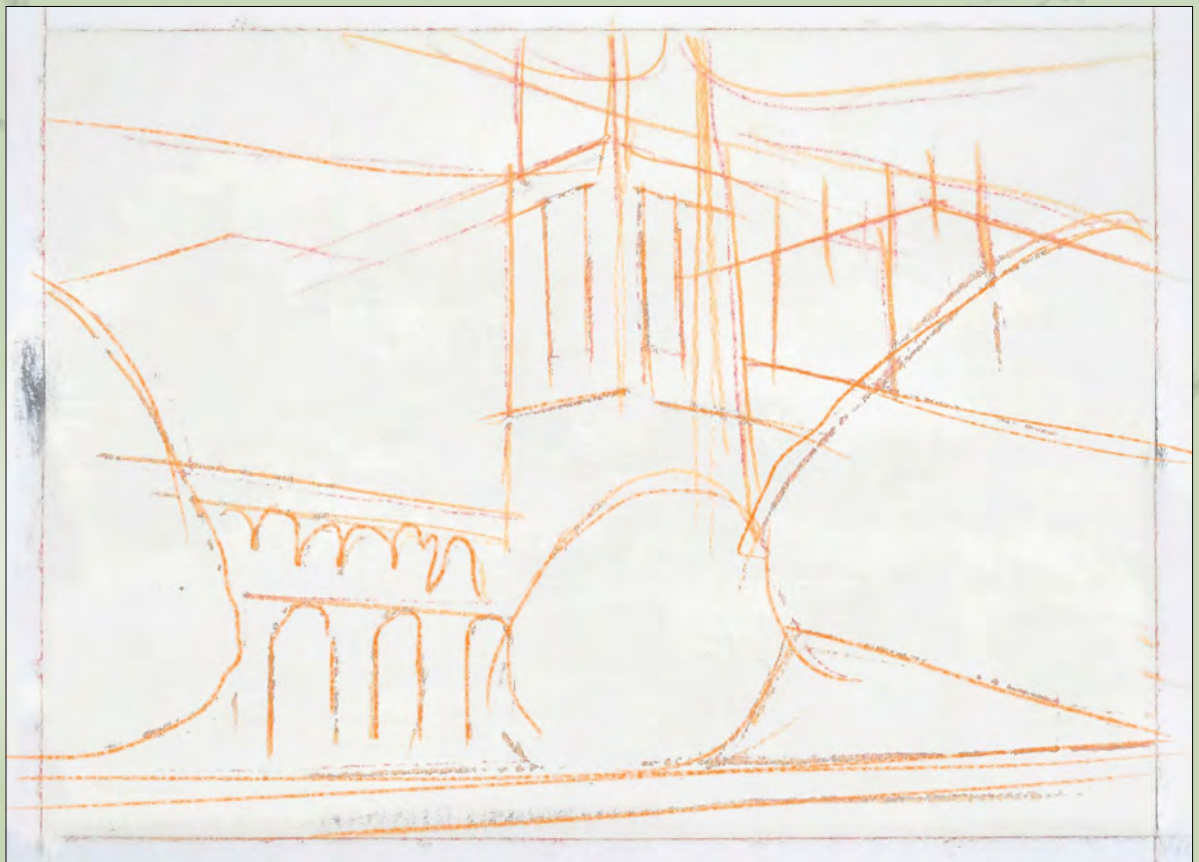
Learning to do this gives each of us the ability to become a visual storyteller, much like a musician who can score an entire movie with its emotional highs and lows rather than striking a single cord.

I'll use light to design the emphasis for each scene. My first decision must be to decide what the scene is about and then to design the light accordingly. Concept artists must be cinematographers,

exposing their designs to the light of day and hiding distractions in the shadows.

This process can bring emphasis and emotion to any part of a scene: the sky, background, mid-ground or foreground.

I invite you to commit to becoming a master of designing with light. It's only through mastery of the core concepts of draftsmanship, colour, pictorial composition and lighting design that will enable you to create artwork which resonates with your audience.



1 Sketching out initial ideas

I like to start by working out ideas in my sketchbook. I find this step enjoyable because the pressure is off and I can just play around with ideas. Here I'm using a pocket-sized sketchbook (a Hand Book Artist Journal) and a Prismacolor Verithin orange pencil. The architecture is loosely inspired by a trip to Westminster Abbey in London. I'm intentionally giving the scene three-point perspective for dramatic effect.



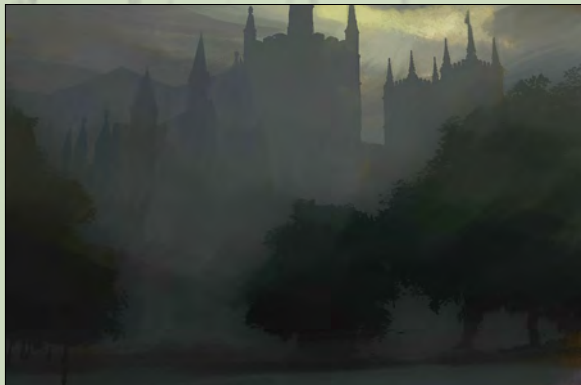
2 Tonal rough

The finished rough is painted over the line art with a Pentel water-soluble ink brush and a waterbrush. Technique isn't important here: any medium that will give you a full range of values will do. The benefit of simple sketchbook work becomes apparent in this stage. Notice that only the face and silhouette of the façade has been emphasised.



3 Background lay-in

Here I'm setting the stage for a stormy sky and misty grey landscape. I like to start with a warm wash before laying my neutrals over it. This creates an impressionistic richness that gives a sense of natural light and visual interest to the scene. The simple statement at this stage is a gradation from a light sky to a shadowy ground.



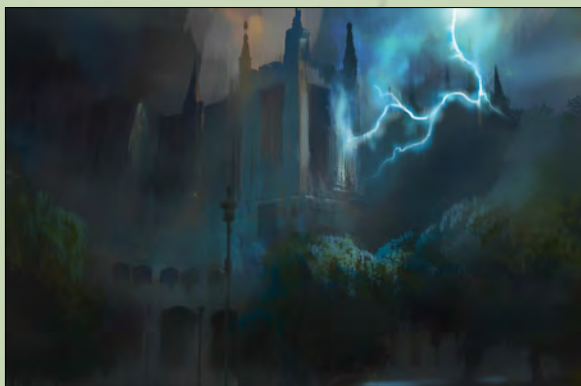
4 Large silhouettes

I create selections for key elements in the image, such as the clouds, layers of architecture, doors, windows and trees. I save each selection as a channel and click them as needed to rough in the establishing silhouettes. The light patch in the sky emphasises the central building. It darkens toward the edges to give the other building lower contrast and therefore less importance.



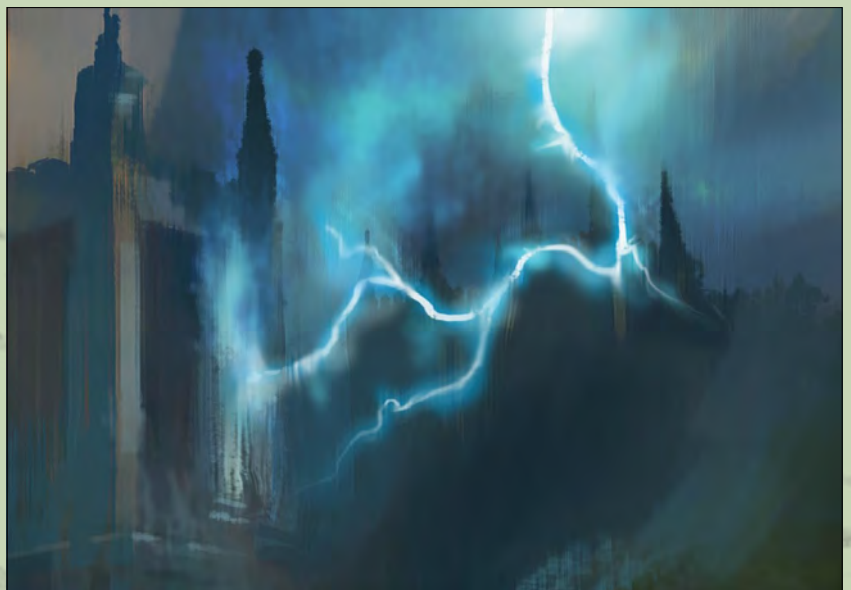
5 Lighting detail

Because the big masses of the scene are already established, I can now bring out architectural details and paint in the light raking across the building tops. I treat the central building as a character close-up, with dramatic lighting falling around the head. This completes the base image, but it's not nearly good enough. I'll try to improve it during the next stage.



6 Ker-plowee!

A concept artist must design the light such that the wind, sky and land cry out to the audience. So I'm reworking everything to make the lightning flash inescapable. The background now disappears against the sky, a warm patch in the sky contrasts with the lightning and the glow has been limited. Regrettably, we can't rely on lightning for every image so let's paint some... ➔



PRO SECRETS

Experiment with values

If you're struggling with your lighting, most likely it's a value problem (lights and darks). Try turning your image to greyscale, and look for clear silhouetting of shapes and clear, consistent light sources. When it's time to move back into colour, try to keep things simple by only considering the temperature of the colour. If you do nothing other than get warm, cool and neutral colours to feel right relative to each other, you'll be surprised at how accurate your colour becomes!

7 ...zombies!

I know, I know, zombies are so last year. This is really about changing the emphasis in the scene from sky and architecture to characters. Try strong rim light on characters or important objects to give them visual importance.





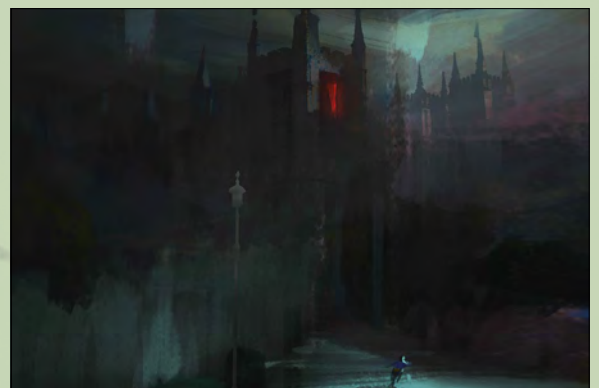
8 Pretty in pink

I have to admit something at this point: notice that every one of my previous images lean towards dark and moody? Well, we're artists, we love dark and moody! But I've seen far too many hopeful concept artists get really good at dark and moody without any range beyond the monochromatic. This becomes a ceiling that keeps us from rising above the crowd, so for that reason I'm going with an anti-zombie pink in this one.



9 Creating a volume of atmosphere

One of the tricks of the impressionists was using backlighting. It's a wonderful lighting setup because it enhances the simple silhouettes of scenes and sends a unifying warm light cascading through the work. The result is an image that looks as if the space is coming alive as a volume of light. For visual interest I'm letting cool skylight fill the atmosphere in the distances away from the sun.



10 Black night of magic

Okay, enough sunshine now. I can't resist getting back to the dark and moody. This is a great opportunity to explore the elimination of detail. In this one, shadows lose all information and unimportant edges disappear into the night.





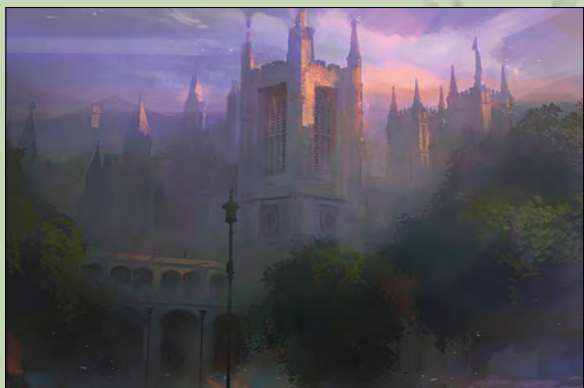
11 What's inside?

I'm using calmer night-time lighting now, because the lighting is no longer about the drama of the environment, it's about what's on the inside. This is my big opportunity to focus on the interior, so I'm lighting up those windows. Scenes like this are often used in film to establish a location before the camera cuts to the interior.



12 Extremes of light

Here I want to emphasise that you don't have to resort to a lightning flash to give light a powerful presence. I'm combining top-light with atmosphere so the light becomes a penetrating force in the scene.



13 Light to soothe the soul

No, I'm not a New Age kind of guy, but I do need to be able to convey the natural magic of light. This can be achieved by "golden hour lighting" when the harsh light is reduced but the warm and cool contrasts are increased in the last light of day. This happens because the redder wavelengths of light are able to penetrate the angular volume of atmosphere, but the bluer wavelengths are reflected away into the atmosphere. Hence the dimmer light and stronger warm/cool contrasts.



14 Into the full light of day

I've been falling back toward too much mood and drama again, so let's go out on a ray of sunshine. The secret to strong sunshine is actually in the shadows; the bright lighting has a tendency to bounce warm tones into adjacent shadows. Add to that the vivid blues that fall on shadowy top planes from the sky and you have brilliant shadows that only exist in the full light of day. ●



Next month in...
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

New art discoveries

We've searched the universe to bring you
the best drawing and painting advice ever!

ISSUE 114 UK ON SALE *Friday 12 September 2014*



Sought-after artist Charlie Bowater shares her secrets for painting characters with beautiful skin

Featuring...

Composition skills

Master artist James Gurney reveals how to get your scenes right every time.



Painter 2015

Don Seegmiller shows us how to get the best out of the latest version of Painter.

Photoshop guide

From the tools you need to get started, to avoiding the most common mistakes.

Miles Johnston

Inside the sketchbook (and mind) of this brilliant up-and-coming UK artist.



Reviews

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...

SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

78 Jot Touch with Pixelpoint

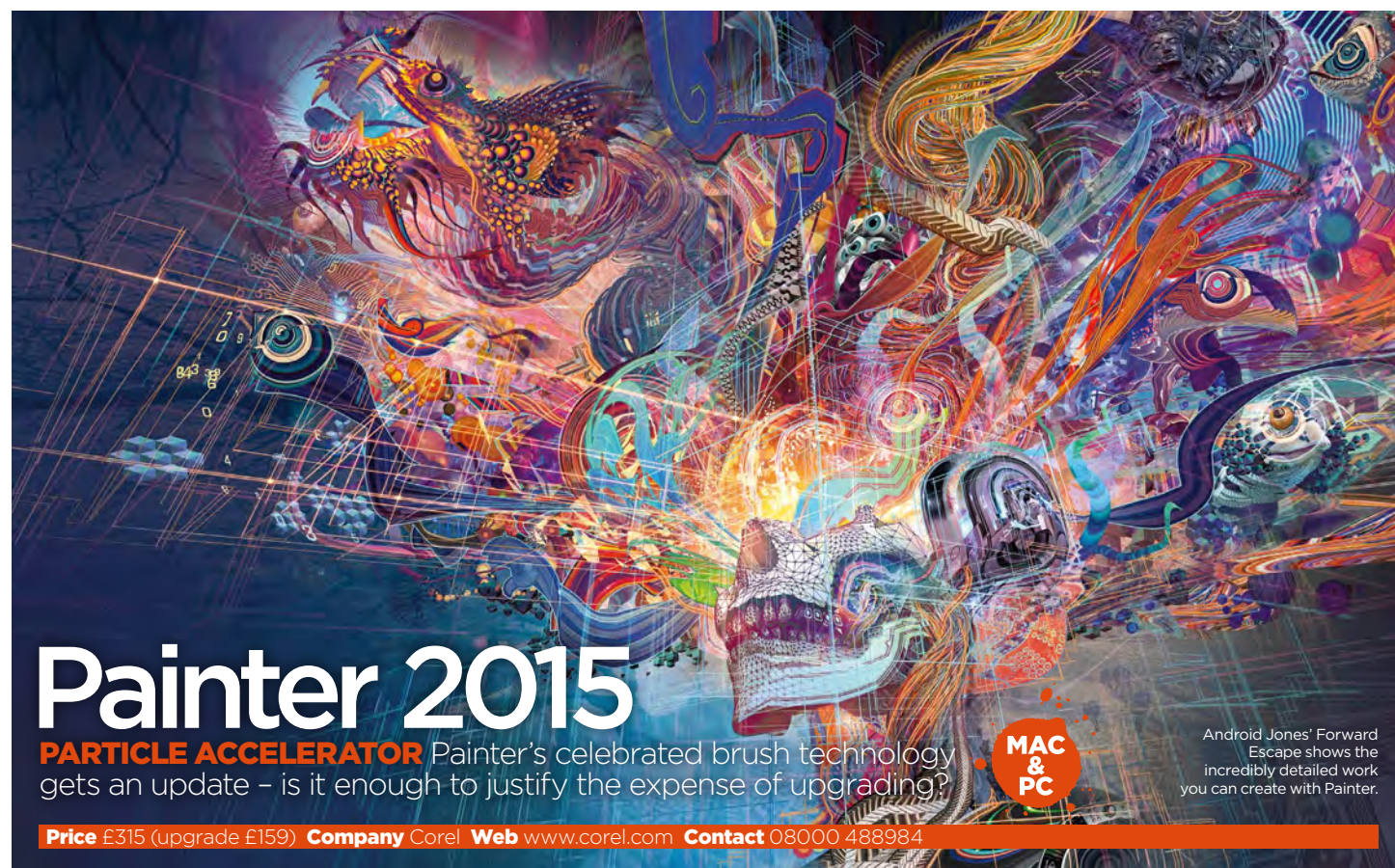
78 Adobe Line

TRAINING

79 Concept Design Workflow Vol 1

BOOKS

80 Fred Gambino's latest, and more!



Painter 2015

PARTICLE ACCELERATOR Painter's celebrated brush technology gets an update – is it enough to justify the expense of upgrading?

MAC & PC

Android Jones' Forward Escape shows the incredibly detailed work you can create with Painter.

Price £315 (upgrade £159) **Company** Corel **Web** www.corel.com **Contact** 08000 488984



While Adobe has embraced software subscriptions to much of its product line, Corel is sticking to the pay-up-front model. The latest version of its evergreen Painter software is a case in point: you can buy a boxed copy or a digital download, but there are no rolling subscription packs or seamless updates.

Where Painter always moves forwards is in its brush technology, which is its big selling point and its raison d'être. Corel seemingly

exhausted its supply of real-world brushes and mediums a few years ago, and has therefore moved on to more abstract creations. With Painter 2015, it's the introduction of particle brushes.

If you're familiar with Flame Painter you'll know what to expect from these animated brushes. The Particle Spring brush, for instance, consists of a number of points that follows your cursor, springing backwards and forwards as you build momentum and trailing off if you draw a sharp angle, resulting in a gauzy, wispy line. Particle

“Particle Effects are best suited to adding subtle effects such as a fine curl of cigarette smoke or a cobweb”

ARTIST INTERVIEW

GREG NEWMAN

The freelance illustrator gives us his thoughts on Painter 2015

Do you use Painter alone, or do you use Photoshop as well?

For the most part I use Painter, although from time to time I'll do transformations in Photoshop. Painter has provided me with almost everything I need to do my work effectively, without having to rely on Adobe products.

Is Painter 2015 noticeably faster than previous versions?

With 64-bit support on the Mac, I can honestly say yes! Painter 2015 enables me to paint with some of the brushes I wasn't able to use before – namely Real Watercolor.

What do you think of the new Particle brushes?

They're fantastic and have a lot of settings for tweaking the particles and flow. I'm still trying to figure out how I can work these brushes in a way that will fit my style. The first tests I ran with these brushes enabled me to create some interesting strokes that mimic hair realistically. That will be a huge asset, since I'm heavy into portrait work and realistic textures.

What other new features have impressed you?

A few that come to mind are user interface improvements and new help palettes. Painter's developers have ramped up support for other tablets on the market and have made sure that the Monoprice tablets are among them.

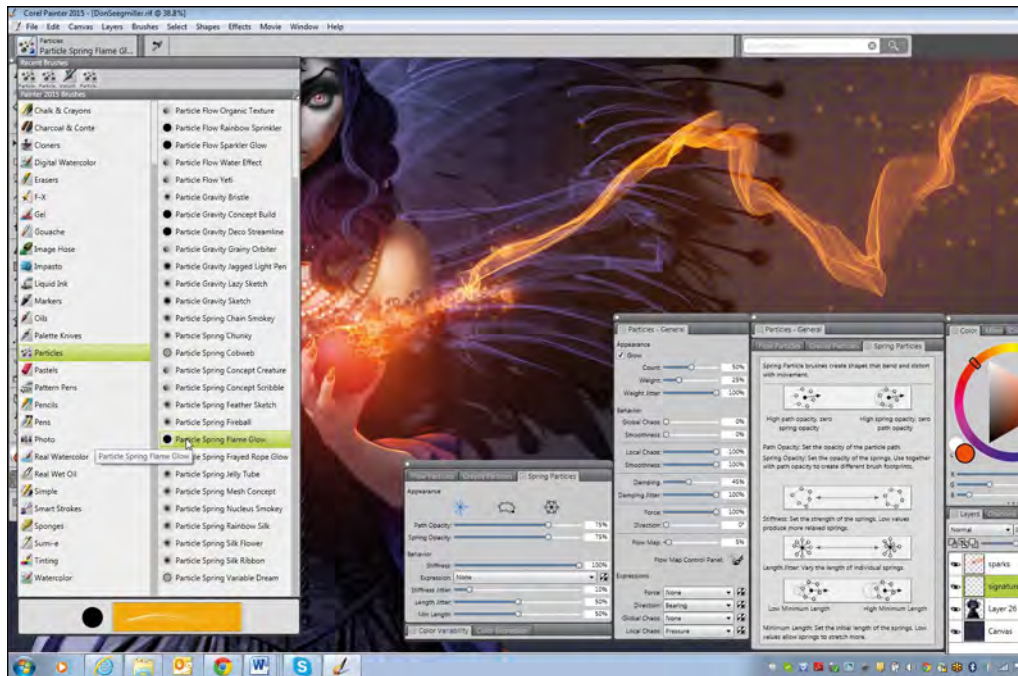
Is there anything else you'd like to add to Painter?

Corel has done a great job of listening to the community and taking the suggestions and needs of artists into consideration with this release. Not that it hasn't done so in the past, but the team has done an exceptional job of implementing features and changes into this release that continue to make Painter the top digital painting tool in my studio.



Greg has painted for ESPN Magazine, National Geographic, the Discovery Channel and Broadway.

www.gregnewman.org



SmartStroke technology enables you to follow the contours of photos with a brush.

A nice touch is that Particle Brushes have in-depth descriptions and diagrams, so you can find out what to adjust to achieve particular results.

DETAILS

Features

- New digital brushes
- Jitter smoothing
- RealBristle painting
- Enhanced speed and performance
- Native 64-bit performance on Mac
- Brush tracking
- Real-time effect previews
- Custom user-interface palette arrangements
- Smart photo-painting tools
- Real-time stylus and Windows Tablet PC support

System Requirements

PC: Windows 8.1 (64-bit), or Windows 7 (32-bit or 64-bit editions), with the latest Service Packs, Intel Pentium 4, AMD Athlon 64 or AMD Opteron CPU, 2GB of RAM, 650MB hard disk space, mouse or tablet, 1,280x800 display, DVD drive, Internet Explorer 8 or higher
Mac: OS X 10.7, 10.8 or 10.9 (with latest revision), Intel Core 2 Duo CPU, 2GB of RAM, 500MB of hard disk space, mouse or tablet, 1,280x800 display, DVD drive, Safari v5 or higher

Rating



Flow Yeti, on the other hand, creates randomised patterns of coarse hair: perfect for painting fantasy beasts.

These brushes don't act like real-life brushes, and this is the point. Each takes a little getting used to, and it's worth starting with a blank canvas to experiment on. They're best suited to adding subtle effects, such as a fine curl of cigarette smoke or a cobweb. They're adjustable, too, so you can use the Particle Flow Sparkler with a large brush size to create a galactic sky, rather than the focused glimmering light points it was intended for.

There are a few other tweaks in the 2015 version, too, such as RealBristle brushes that realistically respond to the pressure, speed and tilt of your Wacom stylus, and brush tracking so you can

change how hard you have to press to get your virtual ink flowing. There's also many under-the-hood enhancements, such as support for 64-bit processors, and custom palette and tool arrangements.

Painter is still one of the best pieces of digital art software we've come across, but while the new features – especially the particle brushes – are great, there are no massive leaps here.

This begs the question, should Corel make Painter a subscription-based software, offering additions and tweaks as internet-based updates, rather than totally new versions of the software? It's a hot, divisive, topic, that Corel may have to broach before the next iteration comes out. For now, 2015 is a worthy addition to the family.

Diagonal lines proved troublesome for the Jot Touch. A future software update might eliminate this problem.



Jot Touch with Pixelpoint

ADONIT AGAIN The company's latest product ticks all our boxes, but some big issues are looming in the stylus world...

iPad ONLY

Price £70 **Company** Adonit **Web** www.adonit.net **Contact** sales@adonit.net

We're guessing that those clever stylus designers at Adonit are regular ImagineFX readers. The Jot Script – which we reviewed in issue 106 – dropped the weird transparent disc of its predecessor, but its lack of pressure sensitivity was a bit of a letdown. The company's latest stylus, the Jot Touch with Pixelpoint, includes the Script's precision tip as well as 2,048 levels of pressure sensitivity, both of which should please digital artists.

As with all of Adonit's styluses, the Jot Touch with Pixelpoint feels solid and weighty. Furthermore, it's well-balanced and comfortable to hold, thanks to its rubberised grip. It works with any touchscreen device when it's turned off, but you can tune it into your iPad via Bluetooth to enable pressure sensitivity and tie useful features such as Undo to its two buttons.

Adonit states that the Jot Touch's battery will last 11 hours after a charge, and we found this to be about right, although we tested the device over

several sessions, rather than during a solid 11-hour painting stint. It charges via USB as opposed to the Jot Script's single AAA battery, so it might be worth investing in a power bank if you're going to be away from a socket for a long time.

It works as you'd expect, delivering accurate brush marks and a smooth ink flow. Lag is still a bit of an issue, but it's no deal-breaker. A bigger problem, however, are diagonal lines. Draw one slowly and it quivers a little, giving you a slightly wavy line rather than a straight one. This might be fixable in an update, but it's rather annoying.

The other problem – and this is likely to affect the entire industry and not just Adonit – is that Apple has filed patents for its own stylus, which could be released alongside the next generation of iPads. This would make the case for purchasing a third-party stylus less compelling, especially if Apple's stylus includes pressure sensitivity. While the Jot Touch ticks all our boxes it could soon feel like, well, a box-ticking exercise. Are you reading, Adonit?



The Jot Touch with Pixelpoint takes its qualifying name from the precise tip at the end of the stylus.

There is a ghostly dachshund in this image. Adobe also supplies retrievers and chihuahuas!



Line

LINE UP We try Adobe's app that – unsurprisingly – is all about lines

Price Free

Company Adobe

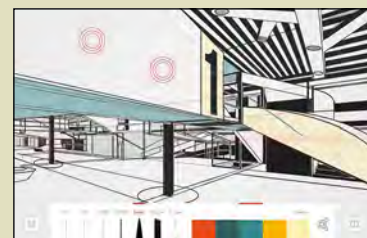
Web <http://line.adobe.com>

RATING

Adobe's Line app forms a big part of its approach to both hardware and software. It's compatible with the company's Slide ruler app, and requires a Creative Cloud account to login and save your creations to Adobe's online storage reservoir. It also deftly solves an age-old problem with creating art on tablet devices: the ability to draw straight lines accurately.

It works like any other art app to begin with, but then gets clever with its Touch Slide. This applies two parallel guidelines to your canvas, which can be moved around and rotated using two circles. Drawing a line involves sliding your finger along one of these guides, and the guidelines can then be moved so you can draw another. There's a bunch of features on top: French curves enable you to create smooth, rounded edges, and a perspective guide means you can match your lines to the correct vanishing points.

Limited colour palettes and furniture clip art suggest that Line is aimed at designers rather than artists. But it's still perfect for sketching backdrops or creating buildings and streets, and the fact that it's free makes it all the better.



The ability to trace over images is handy for creating futuristic building interiors.

DETAILS

Features

- 3.18mm Fine point Pixelpoint tip
- 2,048 levels of pressure sensitivity
- Two programmable shortcut buttons
- Palm rejection
- Bluetooth LE connectivity
- USB charging
- Eleven hours' battery life
- One month battery life in sleep mode
- Ninety minutes' charge time
- Adobe Cloud extensions

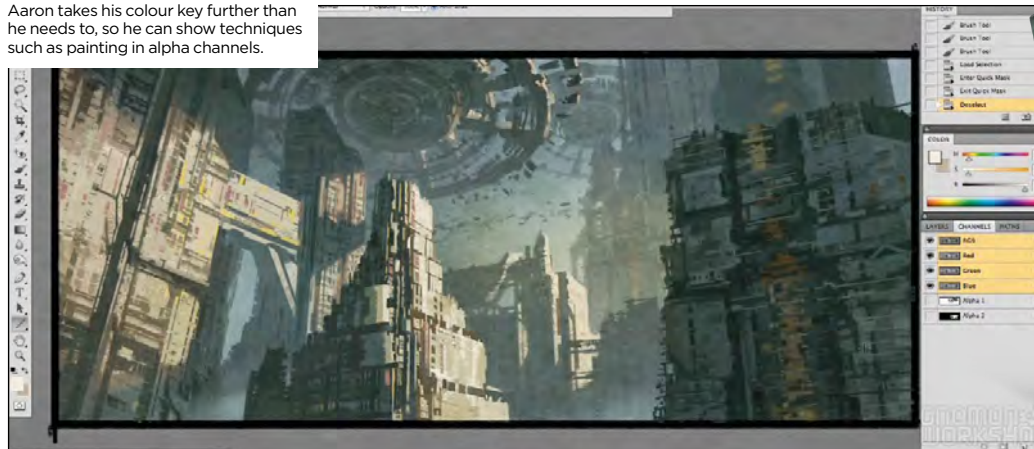
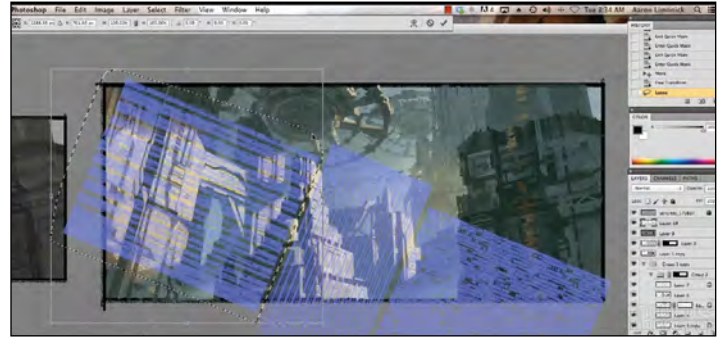
System Requirements

iPad: iPad 3 and newer, iPad Air and iPad Mini

Rating



Aaron takes his colour key further than he needs to, so he can show techniques such as painting in alpha channels.



In Concept Design Workflow Vol 1, Aaron delves deep into the earliest stages of creating an image.



Concept Design Workflow Vol 1: Composition Sketching

THUMBS UP Think you've got thumbnails figured out? Aaron Limonick shows how your first sketches can make or break your painting

Publisher The Gnomon Workshop **Price** £35 **Format** DVD/download **Web** www.thegnomonworkshop.com

There's nothing quite like the feeling you get when you start with a blank sheet, whether it's in Photoshop or a sketchbook, and the sense of discovery as you work out how to make the idea in your head come to life in two dimensions.

We've seen many training videos in which the artist glosses over the thumbnail stage, spending perhaps 10 minutes developing a composition before focusing on rendering the image. In this first video of a two-part series, Aaron Limonick redresses the balance by spending four hours fiddling with his thumbs.

Aaron's mission is to get you thinking about the earliest stages of creating a composition, so that each of your thumbnails or sketches takes you closer to your goal of an awesome image. In a lengthy early chapter lasting over an hour and a half, he iterates a basic concept of a future cityscape, experimenting with angles

and shapes until he finds the composition he wants to take forward.

Rather than use a single toolset during this session, Aaron switches freely between different techniques – using pure line or blocking in with a brush, for example. With his role of a concept artist who's contributing to a team effort in mind, Aaron explains how choosing a specific technique will make the sketch more useful for different team members, such as 3D modellers or lighting artists.

With a composition in place, Aaron shows the crucial stages of developing your image: first a value study, then a colour key. For the latter stage in particular, he can't resist adding more detail than is necessary, taking the chance to show some cool rendering techniques, such as the use of alpha channels in Photoshop to paint in realistic detail. But you'll also gather plenty of design tips, such as repeating shapes across elements to make them feel part of the same scene.

DETAILS

Topics covered

- Sketching techniques
- Composition methods
- Value studies
- Colour keys
- Laying down colour
- Design motifs
- Perspective in design
- Painting opaques
- Adding detail
- Alpha channels

Length

279 minutes

Rating



ARTIST PROFILE

AARON LIMONICK

Aaron has been working as a concept artist since 2004. He got his first job working at Neversoft Entertainment before joining High Moon Studios for four years, where he worked on pitch artwork, as well as The Bourne Conspiracy and Transformers: War for Cybertron. From 2011, Aaron freelanced on films such as RIPD, Seventh Son and Into the Storm, as well as for clients like LEGO and Disney. He's



now a concept artist at Naughty Dog, having recently contributed designs to Uncharted and The Last of Us.

www.limonick.com



Dark Shepherd: The Art of Fred Gambino

SHEPHERD'S PIE Could journeyman artist Fred Gambino be the next big Hollywood director? He certainly sets out his stall in this book...

Author Fred Gambino **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £25 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

There's an argument that tomorrow's directors won't have attended film school. Instead, they'll be digital artists versed in Photoshop and Maya. *Godzilla's* director Gareth Edwards is a perfect example, and judging by *Dark Shepherd*, Fred Gambino could well follow his footsteps into blockbuster megastardom.

The title refers to Fred's concept for a sci-fi action movie, the screenplay and artwork of which make up the first half of this book. The story begins with a newborn baby found on a decaying alien spaceship, before turning into a series of beautiful visuals involving a feisty heroine and a large robot. The tale shines a light on his skills as an artist, and delivering an appropriately cinematic sense of scale and mystery.



This is one of Fred's 20-minute speedpaints, created during his time as principal artist at a video game company.

Fred's also attempted to turn the story into a comic book, and he's certainly mastered the visual styles associated with the big-screen and small graphic novel. There are some nice breakdowns of his artistic process: he uses MODO for posing, and then Photoshop for adding finishing touches. He prefers to use human models over CG ones because of the dangers of entering the uncanny valley, although in some images the difference between the photographed face and the CG body can be jarring.

The rest of the book comprises Fred's work for major Hollywood studios, advertising agencies and video game companies. These include *Project X* (a LEGO telly series), *Escape from Planet Earth*, and unused art for *Star Wars Visions*, a book commissioned by George Lucas, to which Fred contributed a wild version of the Air Whales from *Episode II: Attack of the Clones*. They're stunning images that deliver a muscular sense of power and drama while drawing from the beauty of nature, and apparently even George was impressed.

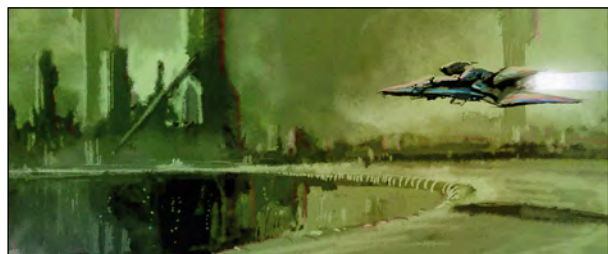
In some ways it would be all the more compelling if *Dark Shepherd* was



Fred's six-year stint producing cover art for the BattleTech books was where he cut his digital teeth.

never made, although Fred would probably disagree with this. We've often seen compelling art books for various films (*Elysium* and *Prometheus* spring to mind) only to be disappointed by the final movie. With *Dark Shepherd* we've got an awesome collection of images, and an amazing film that will forever dwell in the reader's imagination.

RATING



E338: The Art of Loic Zimmermann

FILM FAN How Loic Zimmermann has established himself as a go-to visual artist for film makers looking for something left of centre...

Author Loic Zimmermann **Publisher** 3DTotal Publishing **Price** £23 **Web** www.3dtotalpublishing.com **Available** Now

Loic Zimmermann was inspired to get a new tattoo, so he hijacked game developer Quantic Dreams' body scanner so he could use a 3D CG model of his torso to plan his full-sleeve tattoo. "I left the office with a dozen fragments of my torso, head and arms on a flash drive."

It's a great little anecdote; one that highlights Loic's punky inventiveness and his understanding of both 2D and 3D art. This book showcases both in a likeably hotchpotch manner, opening



Loic's able to turn his hand to a range of 2D and 3D art styles.



with a discussion between Loic and fellow artist Michael Kutsche, which moves between influences, the intricacies of character design and visual effects for movies.

Movies have always played a big part in Loic's art. He uses cinematic, widescreen canvas ratios and pure blacks to evoke the big screen, and frequently depicts pop-culture icons such as Bob Dylan and Wolverine. His

work is in equal parts surreal, nightmarish and erotic.

A collection of Loic's photographs demonstrates his eye for composition, symmetry and character, and the book finishes with Binaural, a series of paintings of women wearing various types of helmets. And, of course, you get to see his finished tattoo.

RATING

Digital Art Masters: Volume 9

DIGITALLY MASTERED A collection of beautiful art from some of our best pals – with the added bonus of 'making of' insights

Editor Emalee Beddoes **Publisher** 3DTotal Publishing **Price** £30 **Web** www.3dtotalpublishing.com **Available** Now

The ninth edition of the Digital Art Masters series comprises 50 pieces of work, including imagery from Serge Birault, Ioan Dumitrescu and Levi Hopkins. The selection of art here is worthy of a compilation such as *Exposé*, albeit with fewer pieces.

Where this tome gets one up on others is that each piece is accompanied by a breakdown written by the artist in question. You can admire the art – most of which is presented on double-page spreads



Over four pages, Akim Fimin explains how he created this futuristic landing pad using Photoshop and MODO.



– and it becomes something of a game as you try and guess which tools and software were used to create it, and even which studios the artists work for.

There's a nice blend of 2D and 3D work on display, too, with Maya, ZBrush and 3ds Max rubbing shoulders with Photoshop and Painter. The breakdowns are great if you've yet to make the leap into 3D software:

Peyman Mokaram explains how to use Maya's fluid settings to create a serene lake, and Rouhollah Toghyani adds a ginger beard and hair to his barman character with ZBrush's FiberMesh.

Of course, it'll never be quite as good as our own in-depth workshops. But it's still a quality book that delivers an insightful glimpse behind the scenes.

RATING

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
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PRESENTS



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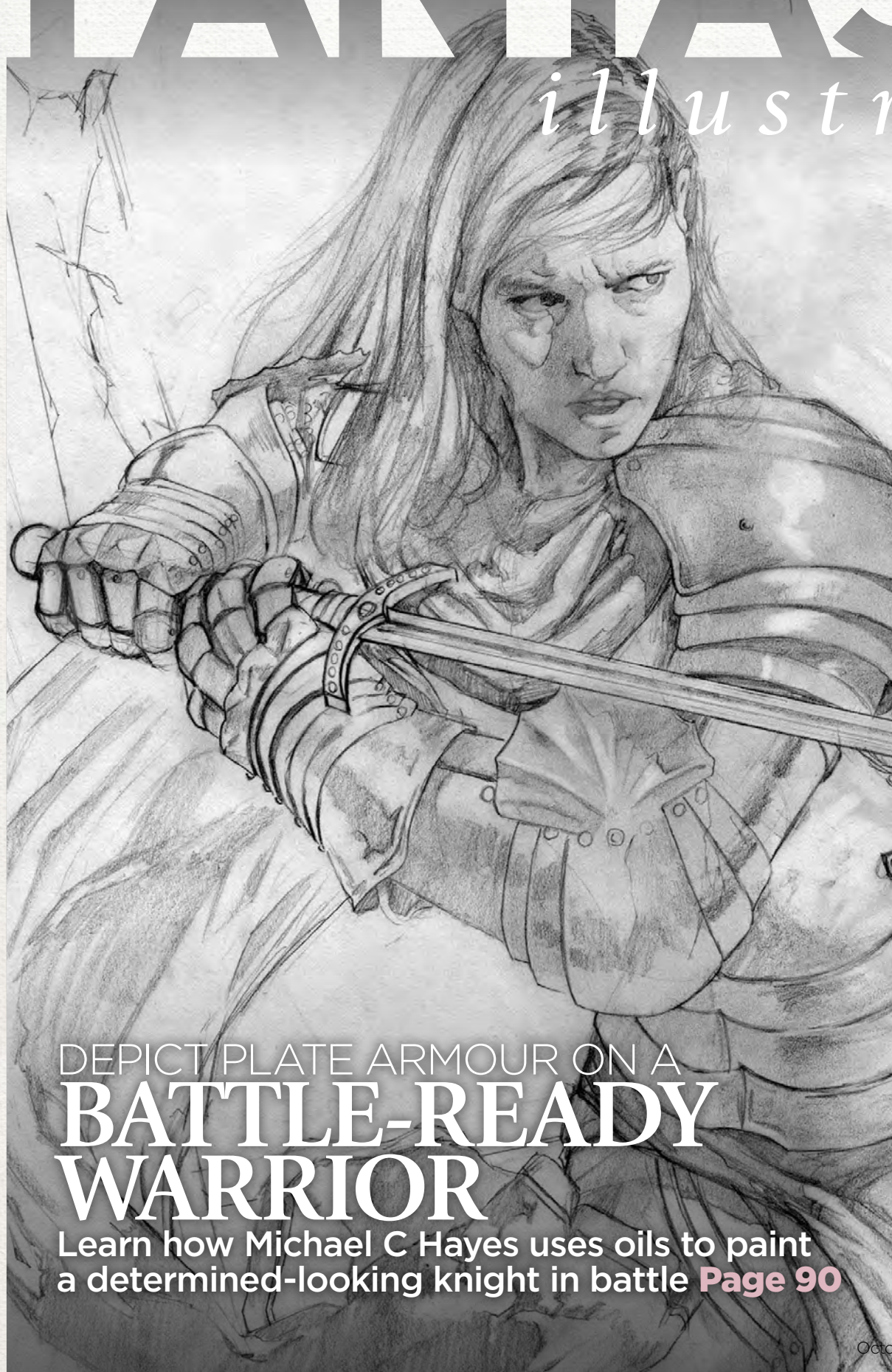


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FANTASY

illustrator



DEPICT PLATE ARMOUR ON A **BATTLE-READY WARRIOR**

Learn how Michael C Hayes uses oils to paint
a determined-looking knight in battle **Page 90**

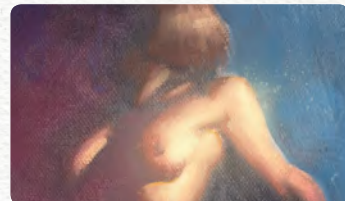
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How to render form in colour.



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Brian Froud on Alfred the Great.

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Jeremy Wilson

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.jeremywilsonart.com

EMAIL: jeremywilsonart@gmail.com

MEDIA: Oil



"Strange fantasy, unsettling horror and eerie folklore" are recurring themes in Jeremy's art. The New Yorker is a graduate

of the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts in Old Lyme, Connecticut, and now lives and works in Richmond, Virginia. He has a string of clients in the entertainment industry, and teaches at Virginia Commonwealth University.

"My work creates mysteries," the artist says, "which allows not just a first glance and first impression, but a lasting image."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Jeremy's characters are frozen in dark contemplation or dealing in human remains. It's their world we're glimpsing, and you get the idea that we shouldn't outstay our welcome."

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

1 THE KEEPER

Oil on linen, 24x30in

"I was pleased when I managed to take this painting well beyond its reference photo. I used phthalo green, cadmium red and cadmium yellow for the skin tones. It's also going to appear in Spectrum 21."

2 THE SKULL MERCHANT

oil on panel, 17x24in

"This image featured in Spectrum 20. It will also be shown at the Society of Illustrators for the Spectrum show later this year."

3 THE OFFER (ACOLYTES OF THE BLACK SUN)

Oil on panel, 21x30in

"Through characters of my own creation, the original composition was intended to convey the myriad golden opportunities presented to oneself and the anxiety of decision, as described through fantasy."





Mike Sass

LOCATION: Canada

WEB: www.sassart.com

EMAIL: msass@telusplanet.net

MEDIA: Oils



Mike spent over a decade at BioWare – he was the Canadian video game developer's first in-house artist – where he worked on string of hit RPGs, creating everything from box art and magazine covers to concept art and marketing illustrations.

In 2009, Mike left BioWare to pursue his passion for fantasy illustration and oil painting. He's since illustrated for such celebrated franchises as Star Wars, World of Warcraft, Magic: The Gathering and Dungeons & Dragons.

"I now work almost exclusively in oils," Mike says. "I'm at home combining gaming illustration with my love for the craft of painting."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"In my mind, Mike's imagery harkens back to the style of art that was featured on a lot of D&D books from my teenage years. Yet there's also a modern slant to his work: it's an intriguing combination."

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1 RECKLESS REVELER

Oil on paper on panel, 12x16in

"I'm really happy with how this Magic card turned out. It's a satyr lighting fire to a Trojan horse. It was difficult to make that clear, having two elements of different scale."

2 BATTLEFIELD THAUMATURGE

Oil on panel, 12x16in

"This Magic: The Gathering card painting was used on the event deck packaging for the game. The client initially requested a shot from behind, but I suggested this alternative pose and it was accepted."

3 CLOCKWORK GOLEM

Oil on panel, 12x16in

"I had a lot of fun with this, and would like to do more action-packed gaming art in the future. I really enjoy illustrating multi-figure battle scenes."

4 AERIE WORSHIPPERS

Oil on panel, 16x20in

"This painting was my first oil painting for Magic: The Gathering. Because of the classical theme, I chose to paint it quite a bit larger than card paintings are normally done. This painting is a finalist for the Art Renewal Center salon for imaginative realist painting."



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3



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4



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Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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CREATIVE SINGAPORE

Founder **DAMIEN THOMASZ** reveals how his illustration group unites people from all walks of life through a shared love of art

Early Constantinou held Creative Singapore's inaugural gathering on New Year's Eve 2012. The British expatriate has since handed the baton over to local artist Damien Thomasz, who's expanded the group from informal get-togethers in cafes and parks, to larger art jams, museum visits and dress-up events. Throughout that time, there's been one constant: novice or professional, everyone's welcome.

"We're happy for anyone to join our art events and activities," Damien says.

"Passion is the only passport. Competency doesn't matter. Members are encouraged to share their experiences as much as their drawing techniques."

The non-profit group is also built around the idea that the best way to improve skills in art is to practise art skills. "We don't just talk about it," the organiser says, "we prefer instead to focus on doing it, and we enjoy the journey and process involved in creating art." Recent events include a cosplay special and a two-in-one sketchwalk and museum visit.

As Creative Singapore attracts more members, Damien hopes to expand into



Purrfect pose: Creative Singapore member Kaela Isa models as Catwoman, at the group's hugely popular live Cosplay Sketch event.

other media, hosting groups covering digital art, collaborative art, live figure-drawing and even 3D digital sculpturing.

He'd also like to hold an exhibition showcasing attendees' artwork.

Whatever the future holds for Creative Singapore, the group will stay true to its inclusive, open-door ethos: "Our diversity fosters greater creative development and artistic expression – exposing us to our common humanity, something beyond professions, cultures, languages and religions."

For more information about the group visit www.meetup.com/Singapore-Creatives.



This collaborative drawing exercise saw members sketching side by side to create a banner of artwork.



Creative Singapore co-organiser CS Peh poses with Kaela Isa, very much into her role as Catwoman at a recent Sketch Live event.

CAT AMONG THE ARTISTS

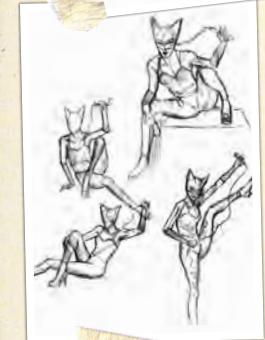
Kaela Isa as Catwoman is centre of attention in these sketches ...



Model Kaela in various poses by Derek Chua.



A speed sketch of Catwoman courtesy of co-founder CS Peh.



Derek Chua captures Catwoman's suppleness.



A 30-minute sketch, again by CS Peh.



Derek Chua drew this pose of Catwoman.



The group headed outdoors for a sketch-walk session, with members drawing the sites en route to Singapore's Peranakan Museum.



A small get-together to practise quick portraits in the cafe at the National Museum. Attendees were given 15-minute time limits.



Workshops



**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**
See page 6 now!



Oils

PAINTING ARMOUR REALISTICALLY

Join illustrator **MICHAEL C HAYES** for a detailed look at his structured method for taming a difficult subject and media

There's something about painting armour in traditional media that's always appealed to me. It's the paradox of having both very little room for error lest the illusion be broken, and having so much room to play with value and colour within those constraints. It's no surprise that this technically challenging subject has dominated the many covers, gaming cards and personal oil paintings that I've created over the years.

There are many schools of thought on how one should apply paint to a surface, ranging from the extravagant, seven-layer paintings of the Flemish masters to strict, single-layer, wet-into-wet purists. While not as rigid as the aforementioned Flemish, I'm probably one of the more methodical painters working in illustration today. I work in multiple layers

and follow a step-by-step process that helps ensure consistent results (a must for working in the freelance market). Although some of the steps might seem like a waste of time, I feel that they reduce errors and help illuminate the path ahead. Thus, they actually save time.

In this workshop, I'll be assuming you have a decent grasp of the basic principles of draftsmanship, because the concepts I cover are a bit more intermediate to advanced. Although I'll be getting into the key aspects of working with oil paints, much of what I've to say about colour, value and edge will translate into the digital medium.

Creating this image wasn't a straightforward task. Rather, it was a process of discovery with many turns. This is to say, mistakes were made and corrections and changes needed to happen. So, in addition to my thoughts

ARTIST INSIGHT

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Oil is a very versatile medium. It can be applied as thin as watercolour, in a thick impasto chunks and everywhere in between. There's no one universal right way to use it - only the way that suits you best.

and advice on the subject matter at hand, I'll also be sharing some of my strategies for correcting mistakes without the aid of the Undo command.

I'll be skipping many of the preliminary stages of image creation process that readers will be well aware of, such as thumbnails and colour studies. Instead, I'll dive into placing layers of paint on top of each other and brush strokes next to each other as part of that seemingly magical process of transforming millions of microscopic pigments suspended in oil into an illusion of reality.



Michael is a classically trained oil painter working both in the freelance fantasy illustration field on games such as Magic:

The Gathering and as an independent artist creating and selling books, originals and prints of his personal visions. He lives in San Diego, California. www.artofmike.com

MATERIALS

OIL PAINTS

- Titanium White
- Ivory Black
- Cobalt Blue
- Cadmium Yellow
- Transparent Maroon
- Payne's Grey
- Raw Sienna
- Transparent Brown Oxide
- (by Winsor & Newton)
- Greenish Umber
- Naples Yellow Light
- Yellow Ochre Light
- King's Blue
- Ultramarine Violet
- Cadmium Red Light
- Cadmium Orange
- (by Rembrandt)
- Mars Violet
- (by Holbein)
- Manganese Violet
- (by Gamblin)

BRUSHES

- Royal and Langnickel
- Sabletek L95525
- Filbert # 2,4,8
- Robert Simmons
- Royal Sable 785 round #0
- Grumbacher Golden Edge
- 630 #1-4 Flats
- Silver Brush Silverwhite
- 1503s #8 filbert
- Royal and Langnickel Mini
- Majestic 20/0 fan brush for fine blending/smoothing small areas

MEDIUMS

- Gamblin Galkyd Lite
- Gamblin Galkyd slow dry
- Gamblin Gamsol



1 Pencil drawing

With any painting, having a solid, accurate drawing in place is beneficial. With both armour and portraits, it's absolutely crucial. A mistake in perspective with the armour, or placing an eye too high can easily destroy the illusion.



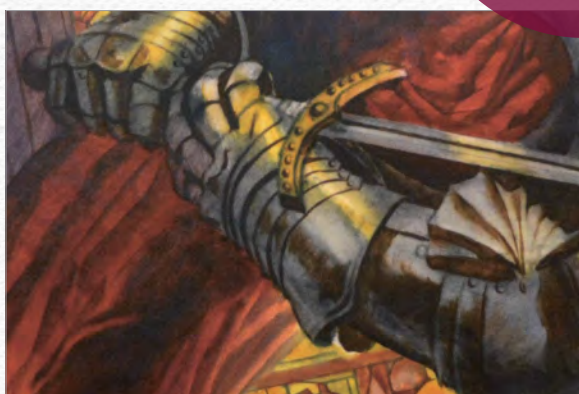
2 Blocking in darks

I select fast-drying alkyd burnt umber and paint in the shadow areas right on top of a copy of my drawing that's been mounted and sealed. This layer will dry within a few hours.

TOOL TIP

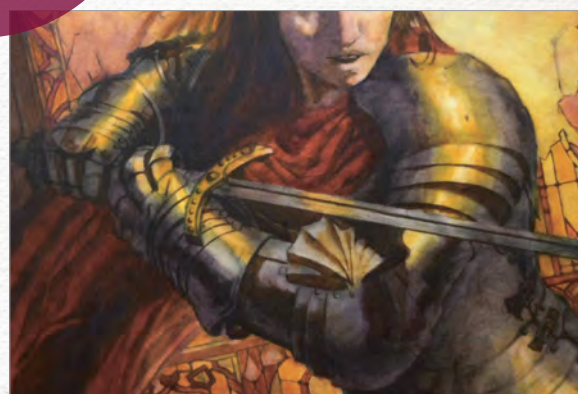
RUB IN LIGHT

A kneaded eraser can be used on small areas of thin paint. This is especially useful in pulling out highlights in an underpainting.



3 Colour underpainting

I thin my paints significantly using a mixture of gamsol and galkyd, and then start laying in large sections of colour. Using the thickness of the paint to control value enables me to make changes quickly and easily.



4 Further underpainting

Usually one pass is enough. In this case, after some sleep, I feel that it's just a bit too far away from what I want. So I add more layers of thin transparent paint to darken some areas and change some colours.

BRUSH TIP

COVER ALL THE ANGLES

Angle a flat brush to develop a hard edge on one side of your brush stroke and a soft edge on the other.

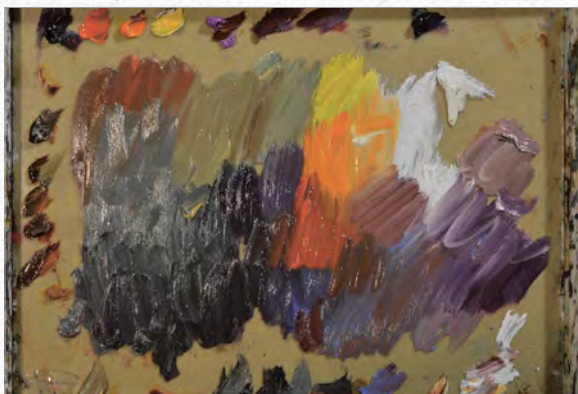
5 *Paint by numbers*

It's now time to start rendering and polishing. The next several steps are all done in one sitting, while the paint is still wet. The only way to allow for the time-intensive nature of this stage is to work section by section. ➡

ARTIST INSIGHT

ON DETAIL

When adding detail, understand that in the visual hierarchy of your image it shouldn't compete with larger forms or composition. Keep it in check by lowering the contrast of colour and value until it exists, but doesn't stand out.



6 Pre-mixing my colours

Instead of mixing colours as I go, I prefer to mix up a large puddle of colour beforehand. This saves a bit of time, gives me the opportunity to sort out colour relationships, and allows for unexpected but useful mixtures to occur.

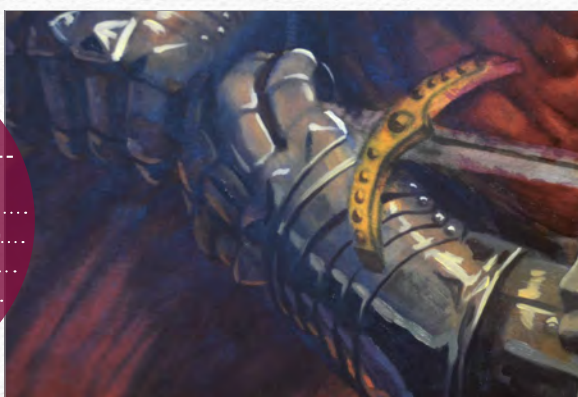
7 Base layer

I quickly and roughly scrub in a very thin layer of paint, using a transparent mixture for the shadow side and a semi-opaque mixture for the light side. This makes it possible for me to place any subsequent brushstrokes directly into wet paint.

COLOUR TIP

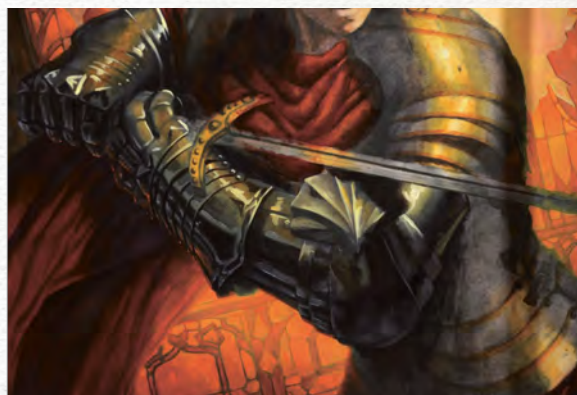
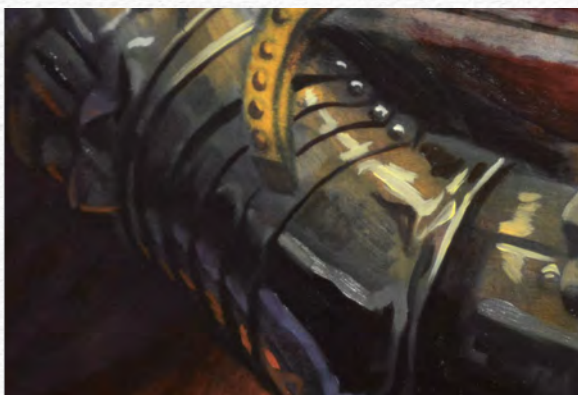
CREATIVE LICENCE

Small colour notes can generate visual interest, and don't need to be justified by the physics of bounced light.



8 Establish value range

With the large shapes now firmly established, the next step is to block in some secondary shapes such as highlights and reflected environment. Note that I'm not painting every single detail – just enough of them to achieve the overall feel.



ARTIST INSIGHT

STOP AND EVALUATE

After each painting stage, I step back a few feet from the canvas, wait a moment or two and ask a simple yet important question: "Is this working enough for me to move on to the next step?" I never proceed forward if the answer is anything other than "absolutely".

9 Correcting errors

I notice that I've made a moderate drawing error on the gauntlet. It happens. I'd rather not have the thicker layers of light colour blend into the deep darks, so I'm going to remove them completely with a paper towel.

10 Establishing secondary forms

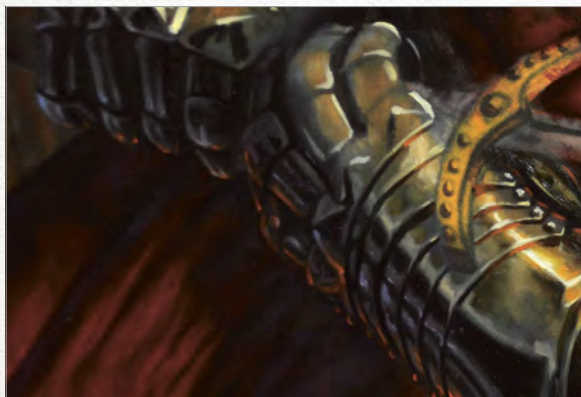
Once I'm happy with both the three-dimensional form and metallic effect of the larger forms, I start going into the smaller forms and building them up. I'm careful to stay within the overall value structure I've established.

In depth Painting armour



11 Shape and edge refinement

Next I adjust the shapes and blend where necessary. With the armour I push what I see towards harder, geometric brush strokes along the edges of the overlapping plates. I also want to create more fluid, liquid reflections and highlights inside the forms.



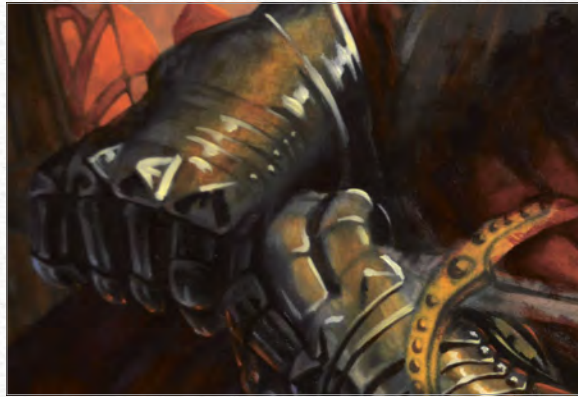
13 Reflected light within the shadows

To even further this effect, I inject pure notes of colour into the shadows near a highlight. In certain areas I use cadmium orange and yellow then blend out into raw sienna, burnt umber and then finally full black.



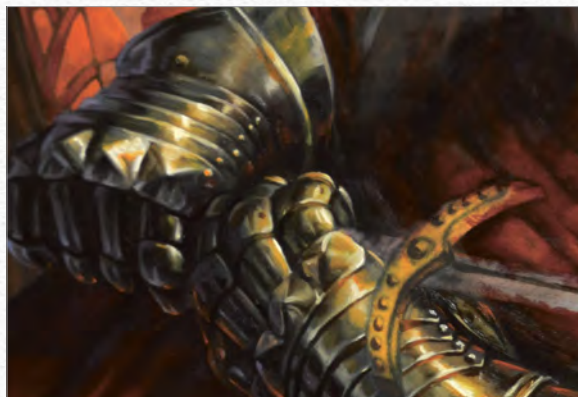
15 Glazing

Once the above layer has dried, the final step is to go back with one final layer or two of extremely thin, transparent paint to subtly adjust colours and values. In this case I need to warm up the armour slightly. ●



12 Punching up the highlights

In real life, metallic surfaces have a very bright, blinding highlight. To achieve the illusion of this effect, a little artistic license is required. Adding notes of pure colour next to a white highlight will make it appear even brighter.



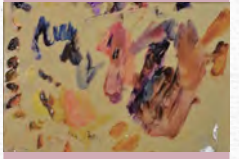
14 Rinse and repeat

If painting is a visual language, and my style a dialect, then I see every image as a sub-dialect, with its own rules in grammar and form that I've learned along the way and can use to tell the rest of the story with ease.

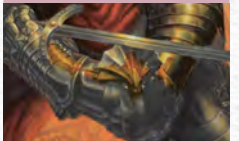


ARTIST INSIGHT

THREE STEPS TO GLAZING



1 Mix paint and a liberal amount of medium. Rembrandt's Transparent Oxide series of pigments work particularly well for subtle glazing.



2 Evenly apply more paint than you need with a synthetic nylon brush. Focus on achieving the right tint for the painting.



3 Carefully and gradually wipe away excess pigment with a rag and/or blend with a soft brush to produce a precise tint.

BRUSH TIP

CLEANING REGIMEN

To maintain my brushes, I clean them with liquid oil-based soap, then leave the soap on and shape them to a clean point or edge.

Oils

RENDERING FORM IN COLOUR

CHRIS LEGASPI demonstrates how to quickly and efficiently render form in colour, by adjusting the temperature of his limited palette

After years of study I've learned working methods that help me to simplify my colour and painting process. One of these methods is rendering with temperature shifts. So when I change the value of a colour, I alter the temperature by adding more yellow, more red or blue.

I start with a limited palette of white and only two colours: usually a warm earth tone such as Burnt Sienna and a cool blue, for example Ultramarine Blue.

Later, I'll add a yellow and a red to bring about the necessary temperature shifts.

When painting, my first concern is value and I'll squint to see the value shapes. I'll also simplify the values and group value shapes as much as possible. With these simple value shapes in mind, I can then mix a colour for every step or transition in value.

I begin by blocking in the shadow with a medium-dark cool tone, ignoring details and variations in the shadow. Then I mix the next value shapes that comprise

MATERIALS

- Canvas or illustration board
- Bristle brushes of various sizes
- Oil paint colours: Titanium White, Ultramarine Blue, Burnt Sienna, Yellow Ochre and Alizarin Crimson
- Solvent or thinner

transition tones, making sure this is warm enough so they separate from the cool shadow. Then I mix the next value shape and shift that temperature as well. I'll continue this process to the brightest highlights. As long as the temperature shifts are dramatic enough, the values will read and the colours will feel lively.



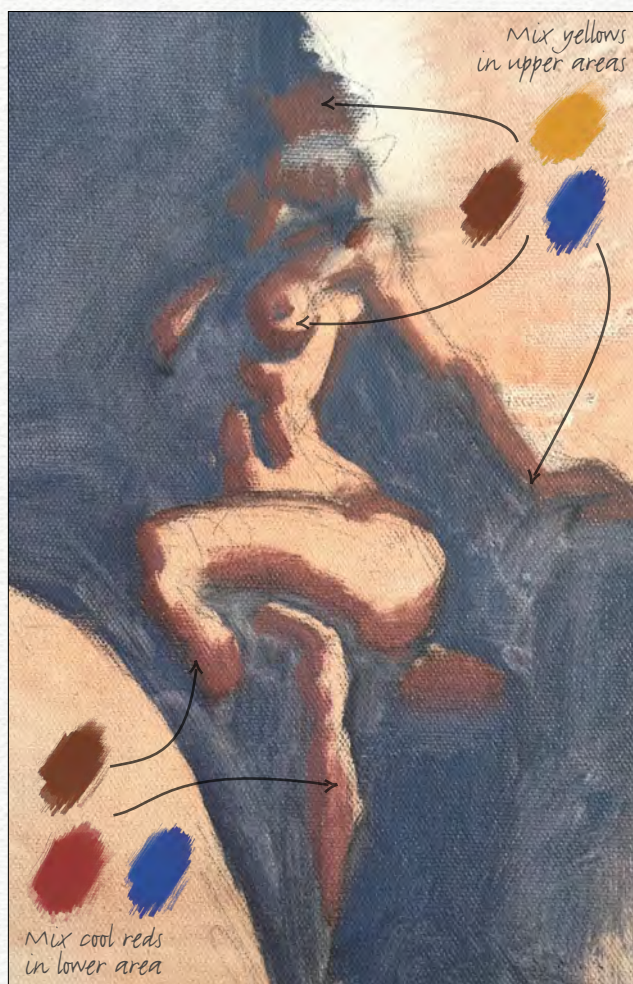
Chris is keen to share his extensive knowledge of figure drawing and painting. See more of his work and drawing advice

at www.learn-howtodraw.com.

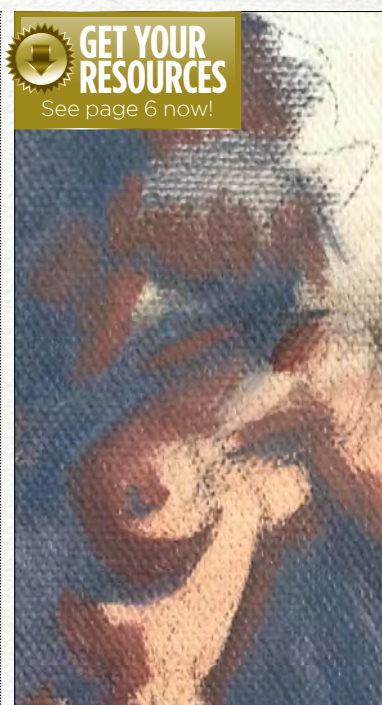


1 Block in shadow

Once the drawing and placement is defined I'll block in the shadow. I mix a greyish blue tone using Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine Blue. I also make sure to simplify the shadow shape by disregarding details and nuances. Shadow variation and details can be added at a later stage.

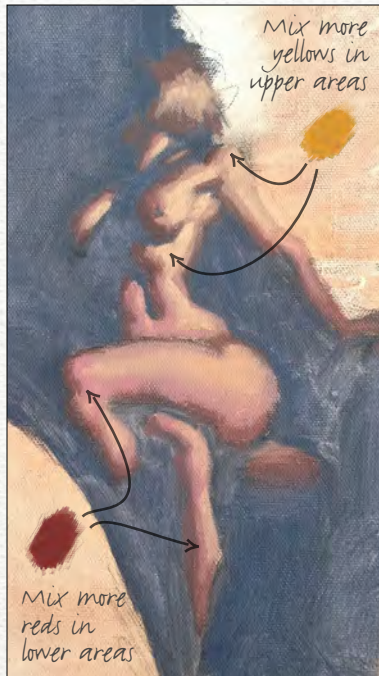


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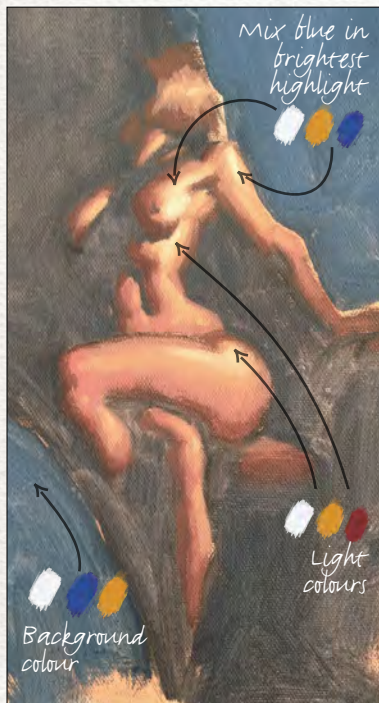
2 Transition tones

I begin rendering by moving from shadow to light using a warm brown comprising Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine Blue. This warm 'pops' against the cool-blue shadow. For subtle variation, I mix in yellows and cool reds. These temperature shifts make the colour lively and life-like.



3 Half-tones and lights

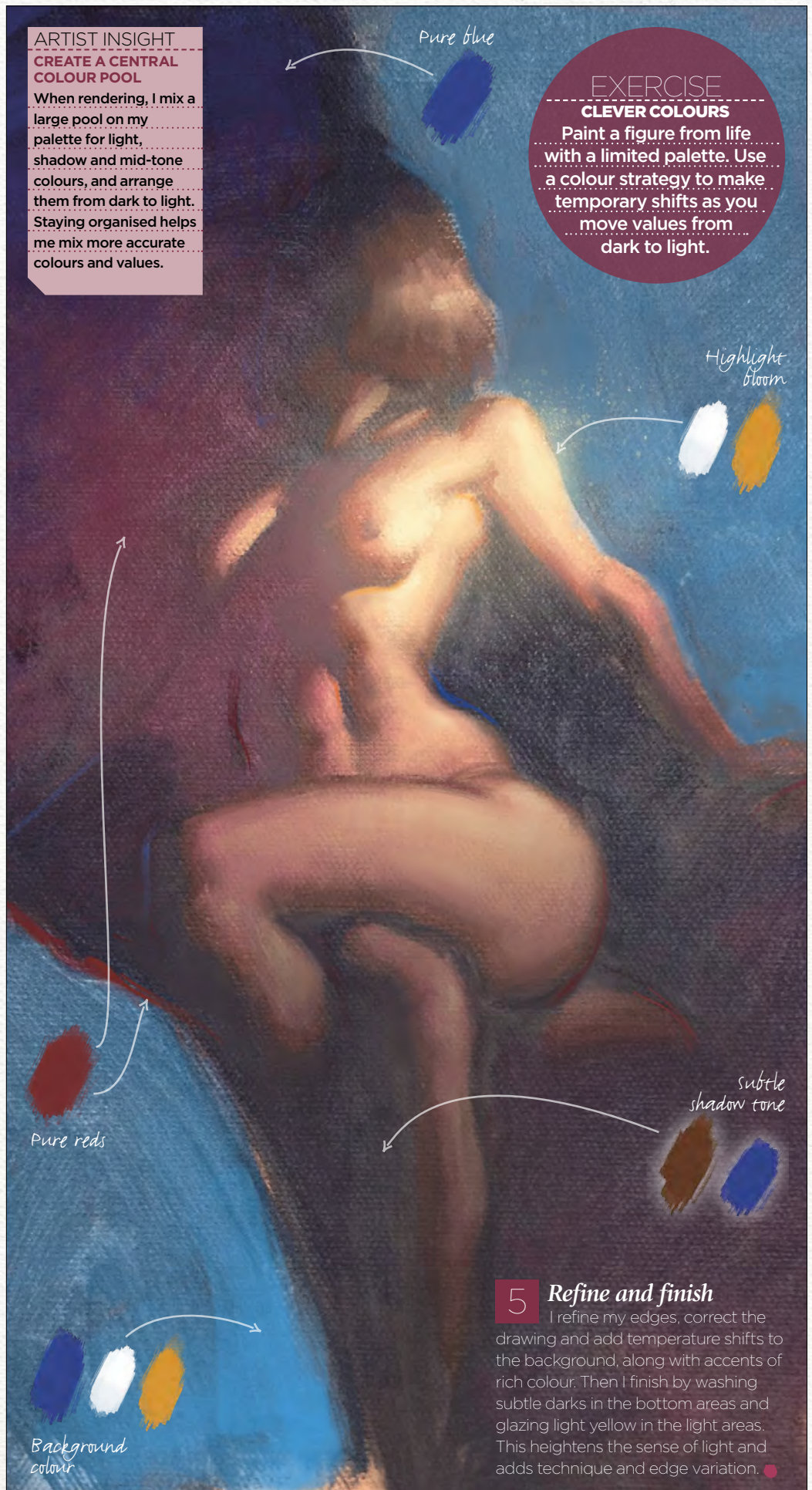
I apply a pinkish brown half-tone to soften the transition, before using a lighter yellow for the light. The yellow pops nicely against the cooler pink. For variation, I'll add yellows in the light areas and cool reds in the lower areas.



4 Highlights and background

I introduce highlights using a cool pink that blends with the skin, followed by a cool light grey for the bright highlights. For the background I mix a mid-tone blue and a touch of yellow. This slightly green-blue works well against the more reddish blue in the shadow.

ARTIST INSIGHT
CREATE A CENTRAL COLOUR POOL
When rendering, I mix a large pool on my palette for light, shadow and mid-tone colours, and arrange them from dark to light. Staying organised helps me mix more accurate colours and values.



EXERCISE CLEVER COLOURS

Paint a figure from life with a limited palette. Use a colour strategy to make temporary shifts as you move values from dark to light.

5 Refine and finish

I refine my edges, correct the drawing and add temperature shifts to the background, along with accents of rich colour. Then I finish by washing subtle darks in the bottom areas and glazing light yellow in the light areas. This heightens the sense of light and adds technique and edge variation.

First Impressions

✧ *Brian Froud* ✧

Since seeking solace in the Hampshire woods, Brian has always found wonder and humour in art



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I grew up in Hampshire, southern England, in a place called Yately. It was a small country village, and my school was surrounded by trees and scrubland. This is where I found adventure, by exploring the hidden, secret places. I felt so at home in such a liminal place. I won five shillings in a local art competition – this seemingly vast sum of money sparked my interest in art (and money still does!)

You're a child, you see a painting or drawing that changes everything... what are you looking at?

It's a sculpture – a large bronze of Alfred the Great – in Winchester. It is dramatic. He stands nobly with his sword in hand. He seemed to connect me to a powerful past, to the aspect of the hidden land of England itself. I have continued to explore this ever since.

Someone who helped you on your way?
John Penny was a teacher at my grammar school. He spotted my talent which I



QUEEN OF THE FAERIES

This image features in the artist's latest book, Brian Froud's Faerie's Tales, which goes on sale in September.

didn't know I had, encouraged me in my work, and showed me around my local art school in Maidstone. This was a revelation of oil paint fumes, purple-haired models (Quentin Crisp) and huge paintings of Mick Jagger and Eric Clapton. I had found my home.

And did anyone try to get in your way?

I won't name him, but there was someone – he was an art director – but he didn't succeed. He said that I'd never

inner structures, the rhythms of my art, trying to allow them to be revealed on the surface of the image, making fluid paint strokes that evoke spirit.

What's the most important thing that you've taught someone?

To discover fluid imagery rather than superimpose a rigid, pre-conceived idea.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?

That it's okay, everything will be alright, and no decision goes disastrously wrong. Be true to your own vision, not someone else's. It'll be a difficult and sometimes lonely path, but there's no other way. Be kind to yourself about whether you are good or bad: your duty is to do it and keep going. Believe that sometimes your art does reveal truth.

How has the industry of fantasy art changed for good since you've been working in it?

Fantasy art used to slumber within books and then rest on book and record covers. Now, with new technologies used in games and films it's on new, feverish journeys. Fantasy images writhe and explode across the eyes of many more viewers than before. It's more mainstream to our culture.

What annoys you about the industry?

It's too shiny: much is overwrought and over-rendered. More is not necessarily better. In its desire to be more realistic, it's in danger of going the opposite way and becoming divorced from reality. What's missing is meaning or connection.

Why is the fantasy art industry still the best place to be working?

Modern art has abandoned so much. It's only in fantasy art where technical skills and inspiration are in service to images that engage; where passion for ideas flourish; where metaphor and poetic thought are valued; where drama and story are still thought to be essential in elucidating the human mind and its relationship with the world. At its best, fantasy art is not a retreat from the world, but an expressive re-engagement.

Brian has made his name with his unique faerie art. His designs were showcased in the classic films Labyrinth and The Dark Crystal.

www.worldoffroud.com

Next month

Don Maitz

“Fantasy images writhe and explode across the eyes of many more viewers than before”

work for him again, but later, because of my growing success, he worked with me on four career-defining projects.

What are your painting rituals?

I start at nine in the morning – worry, make coffee, fret, make coffee, despair, have a glass of wine – until five pm. Other days I take off and go shopping.

Is your art evolving? What's the most recent experiment you've made?

Absolutely. I'm going deeper into the



KLM

Brian's first paid commission was working with two of his art college tutors on a brochure for the Dutch airline KLM.



3D

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